Essence of

SRIMAD RAHASYATRAYA SARAM

of

Sriman Nigamanta Maha Desikar

Authored by

Dr. N.S. Anantha Rangacharya

Bangalore

SRI VEDANTA DESIKAR

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Authored by

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श्रीमत्पौण्डरीकपुरं श्रीमदाण्डवन् आश्रमः

श्रीमते गोपालदेशिकमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते श्रीनिवासमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते रङ्गनाथमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते श्रीनिवासमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते नारायणमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते श्रीनिवासमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते गोपालार्यमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते भगवते भाष्यकारायमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमद्भ्दयः यामुन नाथ शठकोपमहादेशिकेभ्यो नमः

श्रीमत् परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्याणां श्री परवाकोट्टै आण्डवन्
श्री श्री गोपालदेशिक महादेशिकानां अनुग्रह श्रीमुखम्

Sri

Benedictory Mangalasasanams to Dr. N. S. Anantharangachar and all the members of his family.

Dr. N. S. Anantharangachar has added one more feather to his cap by his latest work of a beautiful treatise in English on "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" of Sri Vedanta Desika. Among the 120 works of Sri Vedanta Desika, the greatest poet, logician and philosopher, the world has ever produced, "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" stands foremost which happens to be the quintessence of the Visishtadvaita philosophy and Srivaishnava sampradaya, in other words, tradition.

Among the "Granthachatushtaya", (four spiritual works) which are said to be Kalakshepa granthas", that is, which are to be compulsorily studied under the lotus feet of an Acharya, who is a scholar and well steeped in our

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Sampradaya, "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" is the most important. The other works are "Sribhashyam". commentary written by Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja on Brahmasutras, "Sri Gitabhashyam", (a commentary on Sri Bhagavad Geetha by Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja) and "Sri Bhagavadvishyam", which is the commentary on the thousand verses of the saint Nammazhvar, called Thiruvaimozhi Ayiram.

Not much is lost by not doing Kalakshepam of the above three works under an Acharya but everything is lost if the Kalakshepa of Srimad Rahasya Traya Sara is not done under an Acharya.

Kenopanishad says, "Avijnatam vijanatam vijnatam Avijanatam" about Lord Sriman Narayana, who is the Parabrahman. This means that if a person says he knows everything about Lord Sriman Narayana, that is His "Svarupa", "Guna", "Vibhuti", it means, he does not know anything about Lord Sriman Narayana, on the other hand, if a person says he knows nothing about Lord Sriman Narayana, it means he knows everything abut Lord Sriman Narayana. This in other words means that greatness of Lord Sriman Narayana, is unlimited.

It is said that this Upanishadic statement is equally applicable to Srimad Rahasya Traya Sara, which means in other words its greatness is also not fathomable.

Srimad Rahasya Traya Sara is compared to the holy river Ganges which takes birth in the sacred and lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. It has three different streams, one in "Deva Loka" (heaven), the second in "Bhooloka", that is this world and the third one in "Patala Loka". A dip in the Ganges washes all our sins.

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In the case of Srimad Rahasyatrayasara, it takes its birth in, "Sri Nigamanta Mahadesika", who is the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. This also has three streams, which are three Rahasyas, that is "Moola mantra" (8 syllables mantra of Sriman Narayana), "Dvaya mantra" which comprises of 25 syllables and "Charama Shloka mantra", which has 32 syllables. So, "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" is the elaboration of the inner meanings contained in the above three mantras which are called Rahasyas because the Acharya has to preach these in solitude and not in public. A dip in "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara", that is knowing its contents from an Acharya purifies us. So, it is the primary duty of every Vadagalai Srivaishnava to know the contents of "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" and acquire good knowledge of our philosophy and Sampradaya and translate the teachings contained therein into practice.

Putting in a nutshell, "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" deals with the Doctrine of Prapatti (Saranagathi) which if done through an Acharya is the surest means of attaining "salvation" or eternal bliss in Sri Vaikunta Divyaloka.

The original text of this masterly work is in manipravala character and for a layman it is difficult to make out from the original text. In the present circumstances it is not possible for all persons to sit under the feet of an Acharya and study this work. Many having a keen interest in our sampradaya have settled down in foreign countries and they find it difficult to understand this work in its original text. So a treatise on Srimad Rahasya Traya Sara in English language is essentially required to understand this valuable work.

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English has been an ideal and common medium of communication to all in the present world irrespective of their mother tongue.

So this treatise in English of "Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" fulfils the desire of thousands of people belonging to Sri Swamy Desikan's sampradaya and they will certainly get an insight in to the original text through this valuable treatise.

By going this work, it is found that this treatise is a faithful and at the same time an abridged version of original text. The readers of this treatise will certainly reap maximum benefits by getting a full knowledge of the original text.

Sri Vedanta Desika says that Lord Sriman Narayana will not confer Moksha on people who do not do Prapatti at His lotus feet. This statement can be extended further and said that a knowledge of Srimad Rahasyatrayasara is essential to attain Moksha. It is in this context that this treatise becomes a precious possession by everybody to get fairly an in-depth knowledge of Srimad Rahasyatrayasara, whose greatness was elaborated in the preceding paragraphs.

About the author Dr. U.Ve. Vidwan N. S. Anantharangacharya : This author is occupying an important and central place in the galaxy of disciples of this Ashram. This author would not have attained such greatness but for the gracious blessings of Poundarikapuram Srimad Andavan His Holiness Srinivasa Mahadesikan who was known for his "jnana", "Vairagya" and "Anushtana". The author's Kalakshepa Acharya Sri U. Ve. Sri Krishnathathcharya is also a prominent disciple of Sri Poundarikapuram Srimad Andavan His Holiness Srinivasa Mahadesikan, under whose lotus feet he studied all the scriptures of our philosophy and sampradaya. Though Dr. N.S. Anantharangacharya is an

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Octogenarian, he is young in spirits by the grace of Bhagavan, Bhagavatas and Acharyas.

He is to be congratulated on his marvellous achievements which nobody else can claim in recent years.

His continuous service to Srivaishnava sampradaya and community is something which cannot be described in words. His works in lucid style will ever be a beacon light to all who have a desire to know our philosophy and sampradaya.

This Ashramam is justifiably proud of him and our prayer to poorvacharyas and the Divine couple of Srirangam, to confer on him a long and healthy life so that he will continue his valuable service for several years to come.

Before commencing the reading of this treatise, the reader should recite the taniyan of his / her own Acharya.

Iti Narayana Smaranams

Sri Sri Gopala Desikamahadesika Yatayah
Andavan Poundarikapuram Swamy Ashramam
Srirangam

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श्रीः

Srimathe Rangaramanuja Mahadeskaya Namaha
Srimathe Srinivasa Ramanuja Mahadesikaya Namaha
Srimathe Vedantha Ramanuja Mahadesikaya Namaha
Srimathe Ranganatha Mahadesikaya Namaha
Srimathe Srinivasa Mahadesikaya Namaha
Srimathe Nigamantha Mahadesikaya Namaha
Srimathe Bhagawathe Bhashyakaraya Mahadesikaya Namaha
Sri Ranganatha Divyamani Padukabyam Namaha

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Date : 14-12-2003

श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्याणां श्रीरङ्गं श्रीमदाण्डवन्
श्री श्री रङ्गरामानुज यतीनां अनुग्रह श्रीमुखम्

रहस्यत्रयसाराख्यग्रन्थो देशिकनिर्मितः ।
सर्व - वेदान्त - शास्त्रर्थ - साररूपो महानयम् ।।
द्वात्रिंशदधिकारैर्हि विद्या संख्या समन्वितैः ।
मेदुरस्सादरं सर्वैः गुणानन्तैश्च तात्विकैः ।।
तादृशं ग्रन्थरत्नं हि हूणभाषाविशारदैः ।
अनन्तरंगनाम्नातु भासुरैर्भूसुरोत्तमैः ।।
बहुग्रन्थविनिर्माण रव्यात पाण्डित्य शोभितैः ।
भाषान्तरीकृतं सम्यक् सर्वतत्वविबोधकम् ।
सर्वाशसहितं सूक्ष्मं सर्वसंशयनाशकम् ।

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पठने पाठनेचैव धारणे च हितङ्करम् ।।
मुमुक्षुभिस्सदा ग्राह्यं मोचातुल्यरसप्रदम् ।
श्रेष्ठं विश्वजनीनं हि ग्राह्यग्रहसमुत्सुकैः ।।
अनन्तप्रणीता रहस्यार्थसारः
सदा ह्यत्रपेयस्सुधीपूर योग्यः ।
मुदाचिन्तनीयस्तदीयैर्हि भव्यैः
अविद्यादि दोष प्रहाणाय नित्यम् ।
नारायण ! नारायण !! नारायण !!!

इत्थ

श्रीरङ्ग श्रीमदाण्डवन्, श्रीरङ्गरामानुजयतिः

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श्रीमत् परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्याणां
श्री श्री रङ्गप्रियमहादेशिकानां अनुग्रह श्रीमुखम्

Narayana Smaranas by

His Holiness Sri Sri Rangapriya Mahadesikan

श्रीमते श्रीनिवास महादेशिकाय नमः
श्रीमते श्रीनिवास रङ्गमहायोगिने नमः

Among hundred & odd Sacred Texts conferred by Vedanta Desika, Srimad Rahasyatrayasara occupies a special place, because of its many distinctive features.

It contains the sum & substance of Sri Visistadvaita Philosophy and Sri Vaishnava Religion. It teaches tattva, hita & purusharta, to be necessarily known by a mumukshu i.e. an aspirant after moksha. It accepts Prapatti (or sharanagathi) as an independent and efficacious means for moksha.

The text clearly shows that Mulamantra, Dvaya-mantra and Charama-shloka-which are the "Rahasyatrayas" expound Prapatti doctrine, and further details Prapatti svarupa, prakara, parikara, anushtana, giving in addition Prapanna - lakshana and his uttarakritya svarupa.

The text is in Manipravala language - a harmonious blending of Sanskrit and Tamil, the philosophy therein being profoundly documented by "pramanas" from smriti, itihasa, puranas and Alwars' works. It is thereby made universal, with no restriction in regard to class, caste, sex, qualification, etc., as in the case of Prastanatraya bhashyas.

The declaration of Prapatti as mokshipaya, which is

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open to all, throws light on devotion to truth and catholicity of Visistadvaita Philosophy.

The Sacred Text itself is a "sara" on the Rahastyatraya, and to get its essence in "English" is a commendable task. By going through the five main vyakhyanas of our Poorvacharyas for this text, our doyen octogenarian, Dr. N. S. Anantha Rangachar, has achieved a praiseworthy accomplishment.

The matter presented in "simple" English, to enkindle the philosophical interest of the students world over, is commendable and we pray success to this endeavour of the Veteran Scriptural Teacher.

With Narayana Smaranam

श्री श्री रङ्गप्रियश्रीः श्रीः

Vrischika Krishna Dvitiya
Bangalore
10-12-2003

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Author's Submission

'न्यस्तात्मीयभरं वरप्रदगुरौ वैराग्यभाग्योदधौ
वेदान्तामृतसारवंतमनघात् श्रीश्रीनविासादुरोः ।
श्रीशैलान्वयकौस्तुभस्य तनयं श्रेयोनिधेः श्रीनिधेः
वन्दे साधुकटाक्षकेलिनिलयं श्रीकृष्णसद्देशिकम् '।।
'श्रीनारायणयोगीन्द्रवरदार्यकृपाश्रयम् ।
रंगेशपादविनतं श्रीनिवासमुनिं भजे' ॥

I am happy to present this work "The Essence of Srimad Rahasyatrayasara" in English, for the benefit of those who are interested in the subject. Srimad Rahasyatrayasara is the essence of the philosophy of the three Sacred Rahasyas viz. The Mulamantra, The Dvayamantra and the Charamasloka. These three rahasyas enshrine the entire wisdom of the philosophy of the Reality, the Goal and the Way for attainment of that Goal. This, in fact, contains in a synoptic manner, all things that a spiritual aspirant should know from the shastras for working up his upward evolution. The essence of these three mantras is expounded elaborately in the celebrated work of "Srimad Rahasyatraya Saram" authored by Sri Vedanta Desika. Vedanta Desika has clearly shown in this work "Rahasyatraya Saram", how these three mantras contain all the essentials of the philosophy of the tattva, hita and purushartha. These three mantras are the epitomes of all spiritual knowledge.

The Three Rahasyas

The three rahasyas are expressly expounding and suggesting the supreme truths that are to be imbibed by a sadhaka for gaining spiritual perfection.

The Mulamantra is the expansion of the "Pranava" and the Dvayamantra is an expansion of the Mulamantra. The Charamasloka elaborates the same theme, and ordains self-surrender, as a sure means of attaining moksha.

The Mulamantra

The Mulamantra contains three words, and the first word is formed of three letters. The first letter 'अ' connotes the Paramatman, who is the sole cause of this universe, the redeemer of all, the 'सर्वशेषिन्', the inner controller of all, and the Lord of Sri Mahalakshmi. The relationship of the Lord with others is denoted by the dative case dropped on 'अ', which means आय. The second letter 'उ' emphasises the sole-subservience of the jiva to the Lord indicated by 'अकार'. The third letter 'म' indicates the jiva, who is of the nature of consciousness, and who is to be saved. Thus "pranava" affirms the utter dependence of the jiva on the Paramatman. The second word 'नमः' has two letters and each letter, forms a word. It means 'न मम' and signifies negation of the 'ममकार' and 'अहंकार'. This word 'नमः' means sharanagati or self-surrender. This is signifying the entire wisdom of Vedanta, which prescribes the self-oblation of the jivatman to the Paramatman. The third word 'नारायणाय' relates to the Supreme Brahman, who is the 'सर्वाधार' and the 'सर्वान्तर्यामिन्', and who transcends in eminence all others and to whom the atman is to be offered. The dative case 'आय' implies that the jivatman is entirely for the services of the Paramatman, and that the Paramatman should accept the jiva, and take him to His eternal service. This mantra, thus signifies, sharanagati or self-surrender, as the chief means of attaining the eternal service of the Lord.

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The Dvayamantra

The Dvayamantra makes the meaning of Mulamantra more explicit. This contains two parts. The first part of this mantra, signifies the Supreme Lord along with Goddess Mahalakshmi. The Jivatman who is to be saved, should seek resort in the lotus-feet of the Lord, with the firm faith that the two sacred feet of the Lord are the means of attaining eternal service to those Sacred Feet. The jivatman entrusts the burden of his protection to the Lord here. 'प्रपद्ये' signifies the way of seeking protection. The second part of this mantra, signifies the Supreme Lord along with Goddess Mahalakshmi, as the goal of attainment. The word 'नारायणाय' signifies the Supreme Paramatman, qualified by all perfections and his Divine Consort, Goddess 'Sri'. The dative case emphasises that the jivatman is only for the service of the Lord. The word 'नमः' points out that the jivatman is not for his sake at any time. He is only to subserve the Lord at all times, in all places and in all ways.

The Charamasloka –

The Charamasloka is the third great mantra. This was taught by Sri Krishna to Arjuna on the eve of the Mahabharata War. This mantra ordains the surrender of the self at the feet of the Lord to be saved from all sins and obstructions for the realisation of the Paramatman. This has three sentences. The first half of the mantra is the first sentence, which enjoins prapatti. The second sentence viz. 'अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि' signifies the fruit of prapatti. The last sentence viz., 'मा शुचः' points out the conduct of one after prapatti. In this mantra, prapatti is clearly ordained for attainment of the Highest Object of life viz., Eternal Service of the Lord.

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Thus, these three rahasyas expound the doctrine of sharanagati, as a means to be adopted by a mumukshu. This is an alternate substitute for 'उपासन' or 'ध्यान' or 'भक्तियोग' or 'वेदन'। These two paths are prescribed for different kinds of aspirants. Those who are capable of practising Bhaktiyoga, choose the path of Bhaktiyoga, whereas those who are not qualified for Bhaktiyoga, on account of their inability, are open to choose prapatti for attaining the same result.

These three mantras are called the Rahasyatraya. They contain all the truths that an aspirant-after-liberation ought to know. Vedanta Desika has expounded and interpreted the significant meanings of these three mantras in his great work 'Srimad Rahasyatraya Sara', as related to the doctrine of prapatti.

The Author

The author of this eminent work is Srimad Venkatanatha, who is one of the greatest expositors of the philosophy of Visistadvaita. He is the most celebrated scholar, philosopher, saint, logician and systematiser after Ramanuja. He is an author of more than hundred celebrated works. As a poet, he is unsurpassed. As a logician, he is unassailable. He gave a reformulation of the fundamentals of this school of visistadvaita, incorporating all the elaborations that had accumulated between his period and Ramanauja's period. His contribution to 'Visistadvaita' is significant in all areas. His works are eternal monuments of wisdom and knowledge. Vedanta Desika has established on solid grounds the teachings of Ramanuja. His great commentaries, Prakarana Granthas and Polemic Works

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refuting the unsound doctrines of other schools, are great literary monuments that are unsurpassed even to this date. Each work of the master, is a great masterpiece, and it is not easy to choose his magnum opus. Every work, be it a short stotra or an elaborate commentary or a digest or a piece of poetry or the compositions in Prakrit and Tamil or a Rahasya Grantha composed in the manipravala style having a happy mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil or a dialectical work, has a legitimate greatness to be his magnum opus. The case being like this, scholars often times choose the great Rahasya work 'Rahasyatrayasaram', as his magnum opus.

Eminence of the work 'Rahasyatrayasaram'

This great work is the finest fruit of his mature mind. Desika has expounded the inner meaning and significance of the doctrine of prapatti in all its aspects on the authority of the three rahasyas, the sacred scriptures, puranas, itihasas, agamas, divya-prabandhams and expositions of ancient acharyas in this work. This work is composed in the manipravala style and is easily understandable. Desika avoids direct quotations from the upanishadic lore, as this is meant for the reading of all people without any distinction of caste or sex. Desika draws parallel authorities for the Vedic statements from the divya-prabandhams and has worked out a harmony between the Samskrita Veda and the Dravida Veda. This great work is a landmark in the history of Srivaishnava Philosophy, as it is an original and authentic exposition of the essentials of Vedanta, as related to 'sadhana'. A number of important topics that were not defined earlier clearly, namely the nature and scope of prapatti, the difference between prapatti and bhakti, the accessories of prapatti, the fitness for performing prapatti, the mode of

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performance of prapatti, the conduct of a prapanna, have all been dealt with in a masterly way in this work.

Had it not been for a timely exposition, clarification and systematisation of the very many points referred to above by Vedanta Desika, the doctrine of prapatti would have ever remained hazy and indefinite. It is to be noted that the expositions of Desika are invariably based on the authorities of the scriptures and the teachings of ancient masters. Posterity should be ever grateful to this great philosopher-saint who has left behind him this great authoritative monument.

Ramanuja and Prapatti

Bhagavad Ramanuja established the doctrine of Vishistadvaita on valid grounds and the infallible authorities such as srutis, smritis, itihasas, puranas, agamas and the hymns of Alwars. In this mighty task, he gave all importance to the time immemorial sampradaya and his own mystic experiences. On the basis of all these, Ramanuja made a re-orientation of the school and made unique contributions for the establishment and development of the doctrine of Vishistadvaita. He elaborated the teachings of the ancient masters on the basis of sound logic and the scriptural authorities. It was Ramanuja, who declared that the Ultimate Reality is the one Supreme Narayana, characterised by the sentient and non-sentient principles. Though he did not use the word Vishistadvaita anywhere in his works, the concept was made very clear and Sudarshana Suri named the school as being characterised by the 'visistaikya' or 'oneness of the qualified'; while explaining the expositions of the great statement 'tat-tvam-asi' in Vedartha Sangraha. Ramanuja explained admirably the meanings of the statements of the

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Upanishads in a harmonious way and proved that Brahman is 'sa-visesha' or characterised by auspicious qualities. He clearly demonstrated and established through his interpretations that it was not incumbent upon improvising the principle of 'maya' or 'avidya' to explain the meanings of the unity texts. This was a great contribution of Ramanuja. Many other important aspects related to the essential nature of Brahman, such as His eternal auspicious qualities, the eternal abode of the Supreme Reality, the fact of having an eternal immaterial form and others, were established by Ramanuja.

Regarding the means of attainment of Brahman, Ramanuja established that 'upasanatmaka-jnanam' or knowledge of the form of meditation on Brahman, is the means as expounded by the scriptures. This means of 'upasana' needs to be necessarily supported by surrender unto the Supreme. This is, in principle, accepted by all schools of Vedanta. There are very many references in the scriptures to this fact of self-surrender being a means to the ultimate means of salvation. The acharyas beginning with Nathamuni, Yamuna and others prior to Ramanuja, have also referred to Prapatti in their works, as a means to moksha. There are many references in the itihasas and puranas to prapatti that was practised for attainment of moksha.

In these circumstances, it was Ramanuja who declared in unequivocal terms, that prapatti was a direct and sufficient means to the attainment of godhead and preached prapatti as the means of liberation. Ramanuja has expounded Bhaktiyoga as a valid means to the attainment of godhead in his Sri Bhashya, Vedartha Sangraha, Gita Bhashya and others. He has expounded clearly all the accessories and finer

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details of Bhaktiyoga in these works. In the three 'Gadyas', he advocates the doctrine of 'Prapatti' as the direct means to moksha. In Sharanagati Gadya, he has surrendered to the Lord for attainment of the eternal Divine Service. In Vaikunta Gadya, he advises all to surrender themselves unto the Lord for attainment of godhead.

We notice from this, that the emphasis shifted from 'Bhaktiyoga' to 'Prapatti'. Bhaktiyoga was not discarded. It was recognised and expounded according to the contexts of the Upanishads and the Gita; but, Prapatti was specially preferred. Ramanuja has shown his partiality to 'Prapatti' in his Gadyas, though he is not against the method of 'Upasana'. Ramanuja has not described all the minute details and accessories of prapatti in any of his works, but has categorically declared that prapatti is a sufficient means for gaining salvation. This position of Ramanuja has given room to the assertion by some successors of the school, that prapatti alone is the valid means and that upasana or bhaktiyoga is not in accordance with the essential nature of the jivatmans.

Prapatti during the post-Ramanuja Period

Thus, we find that the followers of Ramanuja are divided on this issue. Some of them have gone to the extent of denying the authorship of Ramanuja as regards the Gadyas, and they declared that mokshopaya was not that easy, and that Ramanuja's doctrine was only upasana. They suggest that the Gadyas are spurious, penned by some immediate disciples of Ramanuja. The others go to the extent of discarding upasana entirely and advocating that prapatti alone is the means, which is in accordance with the true nature of the jivatman.

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Further, the followers of Ramanuja studied this doctrine of prapatti in its various aspects and explained the nature, accessories, mode of performance and qualifications for performance in different ways, and we can see that there was a lot of discussion on this doctrine, while Ramanuja was happily silent about all those things.

Thus, we find that there were very many doubts and questions about this doctrine and the nature of this doctrine was very hazy. Many issues were in confusion and required authoritative clarifications. There was an urgent need to clarify all the major and minor problems about this doctrine. They may be listed like this:–

Is prapatti a valid and direct means to moksha or not?

Who is qualified for it?

What are the accessories of prapatti?

Are all the accessories necessary or not?

Is prapatti of the form of knowledge or is it a cultic act?

Should one give up all dharmas for surrender or not?

Is one competent to surrender or not, as he is entirely subservient to Him?

All these issues have been thoroughly examined and definite conclusions have been drawn by Desika in this work.

Bhaktiyoga and Prapatti

Ramanuja has worked out a harmony between the several paths of spiritual discipline. Karmayoga and Jnanayoga are accessories for Bhaktiyoga. According to the scriptural authorities, Ramanuja declares that Bhaktiyoga or Upasana supported by Karmayoga and Jnanayoga, is the means of attainment of Supreme Brahman. Here, Karmayoga that is practised with the essential knowledge of

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the jivatman, as a devout service to the Lord, without any desire for the fruit thereof, would result either directly or through Jnanayoga, in the realisation of the essential nature of the jivatman. Jnanayoga here signifies the meditation upon the essential nature of the pure jivatman. When the 'sadhaka' realises his true nature, he realises that he - a 'shesha' - is inseparably related to the Lord - his 'sheshin' - and that his ultimate object of attainment is the attainment of that Supreme Paramatman. From then onwards, he embarks on the path of Bhaktiyoga. Ramanuja emphasises that unconditional surrender at the feet of the Lord is absolutely essential either for the commencement of Bhaktiyoga or for perfection of Bhaktiyoga. Without self-surrender or Prapatti, Bhaktiyoga is not possible. It is established that the performance of prapatti is absolutely essential for attainment of Karma, Jnana and Bhaktiyoga and according to this, Ramanuja declares that prapatti or self-surrender is an inevitable accessory to Bhaktiyoga.

Prapatti is meant for awakening the mercy of the Lord and through that a sadhaka can attain any object of his desire. So, if one surrenders unto the Lord desiring moksha or liberation from the bondage of matter, the Lord would certainly grant him that. Thus, Prapatti has all the potentiality of being a direct means to spiritual perfection.

भक्त्या परमया वापि प्रपत्त्या वा महामुने ।
प्राप्योऽहं नान्यथा प्राप्यः मम कैंकर्य लिप्सुभिः ॥

This establishes that one of them - Bhaktiyoga or Prapatti - is a way to attainment of godhead.

It should not be understood that these two paths are not inter-related. Infinite love towards the Lord is described

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as Bhakti. It is 'parama-premaroopa'. There cannot be Prapatti without love of God; there cannot be Bhakti without Prapatti. Both these are of the form of infinite love towards the Lord. The differentiation is in the way of implementation. Bhakti is 'sadhana' bhakti. Prapatti is 'sadhya' bhakti. There is an aspect of self-involvement in Bhaktiyoga; but, in Prapatti, everything is surrendered unto the Lord. Prapatti, when it supports Bhaktiyoga, is called 'Anga Prapatti'. When it is a direct means, it is 'Angi Prapatti'. In the tradition of Sri Vaishnavas, it is noticed that both these paths of spiritual perfection, have been adopted by aspirants for attainment of their objects of desire.

The doctrine of surrender admitted and practised by Ramanuja was vindicated by his successors very effectively, and in fact, it became the accredited means of perfection in Srivaishnavism. Though this doctrine of Prapatti was not explained in all its details by Ramanuja, all the details must have been instructed orally, and transmitted from generation to generation. After the time of Ramanuja, many savants expounded this doctrine in very many ways and the modes of this doctrine were discussed widely by the followers of this school. They arrived at different conclusions and taught them in turn, to their disciples and thus, various traditions developed; but, it should be remembered, that all the followers of Ramanuja have held fast to this method of salvation though they differed from one another regarding the mode of performance and regarding the interpretation of the three great mysteries viz., the Mulamantra, Dvayamatnra and Charamasloka.

Three significant views emerged from all these discussions:–

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1. *The views of Sri Pillailokacharya and others, upholding the doctrine of surrender as follows –*

A. Prapatti is the only means to moksha. It is of the form of the firm awareness that the Lord is the saviour.

B. It is not a cultic act to be performed by the aspirant.

C. Bhaktiyoga is opposed to the essential nature of the jivatman, who is utterly subservient to the Supreme.

D. Abandonment of all kinds of dharmas is an accessory to Prapatti. Prapatti is to be performed at the feet of the Lord alone and He alone is the means of perfection.

E. Goddess Lakshmi is not a 'upaya' but is only a 'purushakara'.

F. The Lord alone is the means of attainment.

G. Everyone irrespective of caste, creed or colour is qualified for Prapatti.

H. It is of the form of firm awareness or 'jnanakara' of the relationship and the protectorship of the Lord and entertaining this supreme knowledge of utter subservience to the will of the Lord and resigning all independent actions for one's own salvation, is the essence of self-surrender.

2. *Sri Vedanta Desika and his followers hold the following views:–*

The Lord alone is the mokshopaya or the means of salvation, and that the paths of Bhakti and Prapatti are only pretexts for awakening the mercy of the Lord. Neither the jivatman nor Prapatti, nor Bhaktiyoga is a means to moksha; but, it is only the grace of the Lord which is the means of spiritual perfection.

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A. Every soul should choose Him and pray for his redemption as the Lord is ever merciful and impartial. The Lord will be waiting for the aspiration of the aspirant for running to his rescue and it is incumbent on an aspirant to pray to the Lord for protection.

B. A prayer and surrender unto His will, as a cultic act, is essential for gaining protection from the Lord.

C. If the individual 'self' does not entertain an aspiration for protection, and if he does not entrust to the Lord, who is the 'siddhopaya', the burden of his protection, the Lord will have no opportunity to save him. He is not of the nature of saving one and punishing another, solely on account of His whims and fancies. The Lord is ever merciful and impartial. He is not granting moksha to all, irrespective of their aspiration or desire.

D. Bhaktiyoga is not contrary to the essential nature of the jivatman. Therefore, everyone is competent to practise either Bhaktiyoga or Prapatti according to his competency. Both are valid means. One who is qualified by birth for attainment of knowledge and ability to perform his duties, may follow Bhaktiyoga, and one who is suffering from the absence of these qualifications need not despair, but surrender at the feet of the Lord.

E. Prapatti is prescribed for one who is utterly helpless, and who has implicit faith in the saving grace of the Lord, irrespective of the difference of caste, or attainment of knowledge, virtues, sex, or any other difference.

3. The third view is posited by Sri Meghnadarisuri who is a follower of Sri Ramamishra. According to these masters, Prapatti is –

A. A valid means to moksha.

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B. Only the higher three castes are qualified for Prapatti, and the fourth class is excluded.

C. This act of Prapatti, is a Brahmopasana and it is to be performed everyday, without a break, as it is done in the case of Brahmopasana.

Though there are certain differences as regards the nature and performance of Prapatti, and as regards the very many minute points, by and large, all these masters have followed the path of Prapatti, as a sole means to liberation as taught by Ramanuja. The accessories to Prapatti, such as Maha-vishvasa and Karpanya, are admitted by all. We find there was a wonderful revolution regarding the path of spiritual perfection after Ramanuja, and it was according to his teachings and practices.

Sri Vedanta Desika has taught thoroughly all the truths that have to be known necessarily by an aspirant of liberation, in this invaluable work *Sri Rahasyatraya Saram.* It can be ascertained that this eminent composition is worked out according to the quintessence of the Upanishats, the smrithis, the itihasas, the puranas, the Agamas and Divyaprabandhams of Alwars. The need for such a work may be questioned, as all these truths are well taught in the ancient scriptures themselves. The answer to this question, is as follows:–

It is true that the author of this work is not teaching anything different and new from old truths, taught in the ancient scriptures; but, the difference is in this aspect viz., that one cannot determine definitely the doctrine that is taught in the ancient scriptures on account of the apparently different assertions made therein. The way of harmonising all the different kinds of statements, without any mutual

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contradiction, is not possible for a common man, and Desika has established the ultimate truths that are the essence of all shastras in this work in manipravala style, which is a happy combination of Sanskrit and Tamil, for the advantage of the majority of the people.

The Rahasyatrayasaram is the 18th Rahasya of the thirtytwo Rahasya Granthas that were composed by Vedanta Desika to enlighten the devotees on the Supreme Truths that had to be imbibed and practised. The first sixteen rahasyas are shorter in length and the seventeenth rahasya is mentioned as 'Guruparamparasara'. The 17th rahasya is also considered as a part and parcel of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. The compositions such as Sarasara, Abhayapradhanasara, Rahasya Shikamani and others are some other compositions belonging to the class of Rahasya Granthas.

Rahasyatrayasara, which is counted as the 18th rahasya, has thirtytwo adhikaras or topics that are classified into four parts viz.,

अर्थानुशासन भागः ।

स्थिरीकरणभागः ।

पदवाक्ययोजना भागः

संप्रदायप्रक्रिया भागः ।

The first part contains twentytwo sections, beginning with 'उपोद्घाताधिकार' and ends with 'परिपूर्णब्रह्मानुभवाधिकार' In this section, the truths that are to be known regarding the tattva, hita and purushartha, and the accessories and mode of prapatti, are expounded.

In the next part viz., स्थिरीकरणभाग, these truths are consolidated firmly in four sections, by answering reasonably

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the several doubts that are raised, about the truths propounded earlier.

The third part is of great significance. The profound meanings of the letters, terms and sentences of the three Supreme Mantras, are expounded elaborately in three sections and it is demonstrated here, how the three Supreme Mysteries are enshrining all the truths of Vedanta, as related to the particular mode of spiritual discipline viz., Prapatti. One will realise the profoundity of these three Supreme Mantras, by these remarkable expositions.

The fourth part consisting of three sections, prescribes the code to be followed by a preceptor, while handing over this eternal lamp of wisdom to posterity. The code of conduct that is to be followed by a disciple is pointed out in the Shishyakrityadhikara, and in the end, a grand conclusion is drawn offering all this at the sacred feet of the Supreme Paramatman.

An attempt is here made to present the essence of this Great Work, sectionwise, for the benefit of those who cannot study the text in the Original. Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram is encyclopaedic in its exposition, and it is impossible to present it in any other language with equal force. It is a challenging task to venture, to capture its essence in English. The author is aware of his limitations and the enormous grandeur of the Great Work.

The author cannot say that he has gained success fully in his humble attempt. This is only an attempt to describe the vast ocean in a few words; but, it is hoped that this attempt may create an interest in the minds of devout people to undertake a detailed study of this Great Work,

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under great preceptors. The author becomes satisfied if he has succeeded in creating an interest in the subject for further study and enlightenment.

His holiness Sri Paravakotai Andavan of Srimat Poundarikapuram Srimath Andvan Asramam of Sri Rangam has very kindly blessed me and this Publication through his Anugraha Srimukham. His holiness Srirangam Srimath Andavan Sri Sri Ranga Ramanuja Maha Desikar, His Holiness Srimadabhinava Vageesha Brahmatantra Svatantra Parakal Swamigal of Sri Parakala Mutt, Mysore and His Holiness Sri Ranga Priya Maha Desikar of Bangalore have very kindly blessed me with their Anugraha Srimukhams. I offer my most respectful pranamas to these most respected and revered Acharyas again and again. This work is offered devotedly at the lotus feet of the great master Srimannigamanta Maha Desikar, whose grace is ever prayed for by me. I hope and trust this work will be received warmly by all सहृदयs

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Bangalore
1-12-2003

इति सज्जनविधेयः
N. S. Anantharangacharya

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Essence of
Srimad Rahasyatraya Saram

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किक केसरी ।
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्योमे सन्निधत्तां सदाहृदि ॥
सेनेश लक्ष्मी लक्ष्मीशानपि येषां प्रसादतः ।
रहस्यत्रयसारे मे समुदञ्चति शेमुषी ॥
विगाहे निगमान्तार्यविष्णुपादसमुद्भवाम् ।
रहस्यत्रयसाराख्यां त्रिस्रोतसमकल्मषां ॥
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानतां ।
रहस्यत्रयसाराख्यं परं ब्रह्मास्तु मे हृदि ॥

अर्थानुशासनविभागः

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Guruparampara Sara

At the very commencement of this great work, we find a chapter devoted to the fact of deep devotion towards the preceptor. This section has the subject matter of गुरुपङ्क्ति भजनम् or obeisance unto the line of teachers and in the conclusion it is mentioned 'गुरुपरम्परासारः संपूर्णः।' This chapter is not included in the 32 chapters that are components of Sri Rahasyatraya Sara. Therefore, a doubt is raised about the inclusion of this chapter in this great work of Rahasyatraya Sara. In this connection, the following points are raised :

1. This cannot be considered as an integral part of the introductory chapter being of the form of मङ्गलाचरणम् because the Upodghatha Adhikara commences with a Mangala beginning with the verse 'आभगवत्तः प्रथितां अनघां आचार्यसन्ततिं वन्दे'।
2. There are introductory verses and concluding verses for this chapter of Guruparampara Sara and so is an independent chapter altogether.
3. In the conclusion also, there is no mention in the colophon "Sri Rahasyatraya sare Guruparampara Sarah". On the other hand, it is mentioned as 'Guruparampara Sarah Sampoornah'.
4. It is expressly mentioned that Rahasyatraya Sara comprises of 32 chapters as "Muppathirandivai".
5. In the Anushasana Bhaga and in the Nigamanadhikara there is no reference to this section.

6. In the verses of Adhikara Sangraha, "Ennuyir tandalittavarai saranampukku" is not included in the scheme of 'Andadi'.

On account of all these points, it is argued that this chapter of Guruparampara Sara is not an integral part of Rahasyatraya Sara. But, on the other hand, it is pointed out that though it is found like that, it is necessarily included in the Rahasyatraya Saram and goes together with the introductory chapter. The reasons are as follows :

1. In all manuscripts of Rahasyatraya Saram, Guruparampara Sara has been included as a part of the great work.
2. It is not separated from Rahasyatraya Sara, as some other compositions like Sampradaya Parishuddhi and others.
3. All preceptors teach Rahasyatraya Saram necessarily commencing with Guruparampara Saram.
4. This chapter expounds that all profound truths of vedantha are known from the teachings of the mystic Alwars. The term 'Dampathi Jagathampathi' found in the invocatory verse (that it is devoted to the divine couple) is also found in the concluding verse of this great composition "Sharanya Dampathi Vidam Sammatah Samagruhyata" and this also indicates that the composition begins with Guruparampara Sara and concludes with Nigamana.
5. The Mangalacharanam found in the Guruparampara Saram is continued and extended in the verse 'आभगवत्तः प्रथितां अनघां आचार्यसन्ततिं वन्दे' in the Upodgatha

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Adhikara and so it is to be understood that this section is introduced for profusely performing Mangalam, and there is no contradiction there.

6. It may be considered that the chapter "Guruparampara Sara" is also of the form of a Mangalagrantha for the commencement and completion of the study of the great composition – Rahasyatraya Sara.

The first invocatory verse of this section viz. Guru parampara Sara offers respectful salutations to the preceptors and seeks the grace of the Divine couple, who are verily the primeval Acharyas. "We utter words of obeisance to our Acharyas and their Acharyas upto the Supreme Lord, who is the Principal Acharya, and we choose the divine couple Sri Mahalakshmi and Sriman Narayana who are the Masters of this universe, as our Supreme object of attainment and means". The first term 'Gurubyah' relates to the immediate Acharya of the aspirant 'स्व अव्यवहित आचार्य'। . The second term 'तद्गुरुभ्यश्च' signifies the Acharya of his Acharya, and beginning from there and going higher and higher, upto the Supreme Lord who is the Paramacharya. It is ordained in the "Shastras" that one should pay obeisance to Acharya Vamsha 'स च आचार्यवंशो ज्ञेयः', "one should know the lineage of one's acharya", 'आचार्याणम् असावसावित्याभगवत्तः', "The Acharyas should be meditated upon as such and such upto the Supreme Bhagavan". The first word Gurubyah is used in plural for showing respect. The term Namah itself would suffice but 'उक्तिं अधीमहे' is meant for surrendering oneself unto the preceptor, 'प्रह्वीभावः आत्मनिवेदनार्थम्'. From this, it is evident that one should have deep devotion towards the line

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of one's own Acharya. The term अधीमहे signifies that this kind of devotion to the Lord is something which is prescribed in the shastras and in the absence of such performance of devotion, it would lead to great 'Prathyavaya' or offence. 'वृणीमहे' means, "we choose the divine couple as our Prapya and Prapaka". Here, there is no eventuality of ईश्वरद्वित्व as the Supreme Lord is characterised by Goddess Mahalakshmi inseparably. She is a शेषभूता of the Lord. The dual number here used signifies that both the Lord and the Mother are the object of attainment and means and that self-surrender is related to both of them. This verse is meant for indicating that the first section called Guruparampara Sara is having "the worship of the line of acharyas" as its subject matter.

The second half of this verse indicates that the ultimate benefit of liberation from 'samsara' can be attained only through surrender unto the Lord. Thus by the invocatory verse Deshika indicates that surrender unto the preceptor leads to the attainment of the desired knowledge.

I. Sadacharya Sambandha is absolutely necessary :-

In this section, Dehsika affirms first of all that it is absolutely necessary to have आचार्य संबन्ध or the grace of the Acharya for all the aspirants after liberation. It is never one's merit only that is responsible for attainment of Moksha. Similarly, one's sins will not be an obstruction to Moksha. It is only the relationship with the Acharyas and the benign grace of the Acharyas that is responsible for liberation. Kshatrabandhu was the worst sinner but he gained Moksha on account of the grace of his Acharya. Pundarika was a

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'Punyavan' but he gained liberation only on account of the grace of the Acharya.

पापिष्ठः क्षत्रबन्धुश्च पुण्डरीकश्च पुण्यकृत् ।
आचार्यवत्तया मुक्तौ तस्मादाचार्यवान् भवेत् ॥

The Upanishad says that one should himself go to the Acharya alone for gaining the knowledge of Brahman.

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् (मुं.उ १-२-१२)

The Smruthis affirm that धर्मज्ञसमय is प्रमाणं indicating that all aspirants of liberation should seek an Acharya's teaching. By one's own Punya and effort, one cannot gain Moksha. By this, it becomes established that other efforts for liberation or performance of meritorious deeds or study of spiritual texts without Guru Bhajanam will not be capable of granting liberation. On account of one's association and dedication to the Acharya one gains the essential spiritual knowledge helpful for adopting the Mokshopaya, enhancement of the Mokshopayuktha Jnana and accomplishment of the necessary 'Sheela' and 'Vritha'. The Swethaswathara Upanishat ordains that one should have supreme devotion towards the Acharya as one will have towards the Supreme Lord and only such a dedicated person would imbibe the spiritual truth.

II. Acharya-Parampara-Anusandhana should be done upto Paramatman

This आचार्यपरम्परानुसन्धानम् or dedication to the lineage of Acharya, should culminate and become fulfilled upto the Supreme Paramatman who is the Paramacharya. The dedication here signifies that one should remember lovingly

the line of Acharyas beginning with his own Acharya with reverence, gratitude and devotion.

'ध्यायेत् जपेत् नमेत् भक्त्या भजेदभ्यर्चयेत् मुदा' ।
'गुरुपादाम्बुजं ध्यायेत्' ॥

The Sruthi also ordains thus 'स च आचार्य वंशो ज्ञेयः' "one should meditate with devotion upon the Preceptor. One should repeat his holy names, prostrate, worship and praise with delight the guru". "One should worship the lotus feet of the Acharya".

III. The Supreme Lord is the Supreme Acharya

The Supreme Paramatman is declared as Paramacharya who taught the supreme truth out of compassion to Hiranyagarbha, by whom it was taught to others and whenever this supreme wisdom was somewhat less illumined or almost lost, He incarnated himself on this earth and taught those truths that were somewhat forgotten and established the same truth to shine out brilliantly. It is only by the grace of the Lord that the unbroken tradition of the spiritual wisdom is established through great masters like Narada, Parasara, Vyasa, Shuka, Shounaka and other sages. The dismal darkness of ignorance that enveloped the universe was dispelled by the Lord and the अध्यात्म संप्रदाय was promulgated without any cessation in the world. The Lord is therefore the supreme guru on account of the Shasthra Pravarthana, directly and indirectly.

'तमिमं सर्वसंपन्नं आचार्यं पितरं गुरुम्' । 'ममाप्यखिलजन्तूनां गुरुः नारायणो हरिः' ' गुरुरसि गतिश्चासि जगताम्' ।

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साक्षात् नारायणो देवः कृत्वा मर्त्यमयीं तनूम् ।
मग्नानुद्धरते लोकान् कारुण्याच्छास्त्रपाणिना ।।

This Supreme Lord who is characterised with all auspicious qualities, who is an Acharya, guru, father and everything, Sriman Narayana, is verily the Guru. 'Thou art the preceptor of this universe, you are verily the goal.'

IV. The Alwars such as Nammalwar and others are in a way incarnations of the Lord Himself

Desika establishes that the great Alwars are incarnations of the Supreme Paramatman himself for the ultimate purposes of promulgation of the supreme truths of tatwa, hita and purushartha. The compassion of the Lord manifests in many ways for establishing this Parama Dharma in this world through various measures. In the very first instance, he taught the supreme truth to the four-faced-Brahma; when he lost it due to his inadvertence, the Lord re-taught him and endowed him with the knowledge of all shasthras. Through the Chaturmukha Brahma, this supreme knowledge was handed over to many sages like Narada and others. He himself came on earth to establish this Dharma and He himself taught the Pancharathra Agama and he fulfilled his will to spread this knowledge in this world through the Alwars such as Parankusha, Parakala and others by manifesting Himself in them 'अनुप्रविश्य कुरुते यत्समीहितमच्युतः।' "The Lord Achyuta fulfills His desired will by entering into those that are already born."

Desika points out that the Lord himself incarnated in ten forms like Parankusha and Parakala and promulgated the

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age old truths of the Vedas in a new form through the medium of a language understandable to all just as the clouds absorb the salt waters of the ocean and rain them as sweet water easily used by all.

V. An aspirant should reflect upon the Guruparampara with deep devotion

Vedantha Deshika has traced here the significant masters of yore who come in the series of Acharyas beginning with the celebrated Nathamuni. The Acharya Parampara earlier to Nathamuni is not known. Our reckoning of the 'Munitraya' viz. Nathamuni, Yamunamuni and Ramanuja Muni, commences with Nathamuni. Desika establishes here that Nathamuni gained the spiritual knowledge directly in a trance of yoga from Nammalwar, and promulgated that wisdom amongst his disciples. Amongst the previous Acharyas Desika mentions that the wisdom of the Alwars was transmitted through Madhurakavi and other disciples. Nathamuni therefore is here described as a master par excellence who gained the wisdom of the upanishadic thought and the wisdom of the inspired teachings of the Alwars. We may note here that the various masters such as Nathamuni, Alavandar and Sri Ramanuja, their works, the names of their disciples, are all chronologically recorded here. Desika has mentioned the names of the works of the several Acharyas, as they were available to him at that time and this is an authenticated statement and from this we understand that Ramanuja has written nine works and three 'Gadyas' were the authenticated works of the Acharya.

After describing the greatness of the Poorvacharyas, Desika suggests that the Sampradaya Parampara of the post

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Ramanuja period may be grasped according to their Acharya Parampara. It is to be noted that the followers of Ramanuja, though have different Acharya Parampara, are all related to the three Great Masters that established this Sampradaya on solid foundation.

Desika points out that it is the primary duty of a disciple to glorify his Acharya and to keep secret the manta that is taught to him

गुरुं प्रकाशयेद्धीमान् मन्त्रं यत्नेन गोपयेत् ।
अप्रकाशप्रकाशाभ्यां हीयेते संपदायुषी ॥

A virtuous person should highlight his preceptor and jealously guard the mantra taught to him. If he does the contrary his wealth and longevity of life get lost. This gurubhakthi is not limited to his direct Acharya only but to the Paramacharyas also.

Thus, in this section, Guruparampara Sara, Desika emphasises the importance of the "guru" in spiritual sadhana. The Guru is a guide who initiates the process of spiritual discipline, watches the progress of the disciple, sets him right whenever he fails and ultimately leads him to the achievement of the goal. The benefactions of the Guru to Humanity is so great that it cannot be described in words. It is apt that Desika commences his great work, with this Guruparampara Sara, which is an obeisance at the feet of the Gurus for the successful completion of this work.

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CHAPTER - I

Upodghathadhikara
(or Introduction to the subject of the work)

In the Upodghathadhikara or the introductory chapter to this classic, containing thirty-two chapters, Vedantha Desika has pointed out the prime subject matter of this work and the purpose it would serve. An introduction is necessary for all kinds of works for evincing the interest of the disciples regarding the study of that subject. This introduction is like a motivation for the readers to know what exactly is proposed to be expounded in the main work.

Normally, the Anubandha Chathushtaya viz. विषय, अधिकारिन्, सम्बन्धः and प्रयोजनम् (the subject matter, the aspirants who are competent for it and their inter-relationship and the utility) will be mentioned before the commencement of a work and according to this, Desika mentions the subject matter of this work and the purpose of this exposition. In this section, there is a general statement of the supreme truths of the tatwa, hita and purushartha. It is also pointed out that a Chethana or a sentient being who is competent and qualified to enjoy the bliss of divine communion has been deprived of it on account of his indulgence in ungodly ideals and who is floundering as a consequence of that, in an ocean of sorrow and suffering, would come upon a benevolent and compassionate Acharya on account of some good done by him knowingly or unknowingly and on account of His grace, the Chethana or Jivatman would attain the supreme object of his life.

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In this section, Desika points out that the emancipation of the bound-self, due to the grace of the Acharya, is the subject matter of this Great Treatise. What all is to be known and done for one's own ultimate good is pointed out in a nutshell in this section. The very many aspects of that knowledge would be dealt with extensively in the body of the text.

Here, it is pointed out that all attainments including the attainment of the Supreme Paramatman depend upon the 'Viveka' or discriminating knowledge that could be gained from the instructions of the Acharyas. So, this is an introduction to the spiritual endeavour of an aspirant for attainment of the ultimate good of life.

One should gain 'Nirveda' or metaphysical agony for having missed the bliss of divine communion on account of his own involvement in the ungodly pleasures of the world. When one realises that the results of karma are not everlasting, he develops 'Nirveda' that he cannot gain the supreme through these karmas and he hurries to the Acharya for gaining that knowledge of the supreme. Thereupon, he undertakes the spiritual discipline as enlightened by the compassionate acharya. This section is meant for the origination of a desire to know the truth, जिज्ञासा जननाय ।

This section is commenced with an obeisance to the line of Acharya. Desika offers his prayer thus -

आभगवत्तः प्रथितां अनघामाचार्य सन्ततिं वन्दे ।
मनसि मम यत्प्रसादात् वसति रहस्यत्रयस्य सारोऽयम् ॥

"I offer my salutations to the line of Holy Acharyas who are opposed to all that is defiling, and to their Acharya Parampara extending upto the Supreme Paramatman. On

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account of the very grace of these Acharyas, the essence of the wisdom of the Rahasya Traya, is enshrined in my heart."

This invocation suggests that the acharyas that are 'Anaghas' (अनघाः) are similar to the Supreme Lord himself. Salutations are offered at the feet of the preceptor for the completion of this composition without any obstacles and for getting rid of any hurdles that might face in the course of the composition. It is suggested that the subject matter of the work proposed to be written is the "Rahasya Trayam' and this kind of Mangalacharana is an instruction to the disciple also. The supreme devotion of the master towards the Acharyas is also known from this.

After this Mangalacharanam, Desika offers obeisance at the feet of his preceptor – Sri Appullar – and seeks his grace for a successful completion of the work undertaken. In one Sanskrit verse 'मणिवर इव शौरेः' the subject matter of this section that is Upodghathadikara, is expounded briefly –

मणिवर इव शौरेः नित्यहृद्योऽपि जीवः
कलुषमतिरविन्दन् किंकरत्वाधिराज्यम् ।
विधिपरिणतिभेदाद्दीक्षितस्तेन काले
गुरुपरिषदुपज्ञं प्राप्य गोपायते स्वम् ॥

The gist of the verse is as follows :

'The Jivatman who is very dear to the Supreme Lord just as the Kaustubha Gem, has not gained the sovereignty of the eternal service to the Lord on account of the covering of his real nature by the beginningless prakruthi or matter due to his karmas. Though the Jivatman is qualified for that supreme state, he has been labouring under the burden of his karmas. Though he is thus, being blessed and caught by

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the kind glances of the Supreme Lord at some particular time on account of some casual good done unknowingly by him, he will be blessed with the instruction of the preceptors and will save himself by taking up the spiritual disciplines prescribed therefor."

In this verse, it is first of all declared that the Jivatman is fully qualified for the bliss of divine communion. But, he has missed it on account of his involvement in Kamya-Karma or interested actions on account of the fact that he is not endowed with the true wisdom of the tattva, hita and purushartha.

Being ignorant of his nature, he is involved in samsara. This ignorance of his will be destroyed by the Acharyas at a proper time, when an opportunity comes due to some good done knowingly or unknowingly and then he will know his true nature and takes a genuine turn in his life.

The Jivatman is thus very dear to the Lord. The Lord is a worthy शेषिन् and He is eager to grant the bliss of His communion to all. The Supreme Lord is adorning the celestial abode Sri Vaikuntha as described in

वैकुण्ठे तु परे लोके श्रियासार्धं जगत्पतिः ।
आस्ते विष्णुरचिन्त्यात्मा भक्तैः भागवतैःसह ॥

This Jivatman has the स्वरूपयोग्यता or qualification by his essential nature to enjoy the supreme joy of experiencing the Lord eternally in an equal measure along with the nityasurins but on account of his beginningless karma has been bound by samsara.

अनेक जन्म साहस्रीं संसारपदवीं व्रजन् ।
मोहश्रमं प्रयातोऽसौ वासनारेणुकुण्ठितः ॥

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Migrating in the cycle of samsara in many many thousands of births and being weakened on account of the dust of reminiscent impressions he is fatigued and deluded. He is thus in a forlorn state deprived of the true illumination of tattva, hita and purushartha, knowledge of the Supreme Reality, the path of spiritual discipline and the supreme object of attainment.

Here, the masters give the analogy of the "Rajakumara Nyaya" -

"When a king had been to the forest for hunting along with his 'Anthahpura' and children, the prince who had not yet gained speech, missed his way in play and reached a hamlet of hunters. He grew up in the hunters' camp and behaved as they behaved. He did not know his destiny and he was not blessed with any samskaras. He was considering himself as a hunter-boy and was indulging in detestable objects. When some kind hearted person who found that he was a prince, who had missed his way, taught him that he was a prince and not a hunter-boy and that his father was pining to unite with him. Then the hunter-boy came to know about his true nature and when he was taught so, he yearned to unite with his father and giving up the false notion of a hunter-boy, he would approach and unite with his father."

Similarly, the Jivatman who has not known his true nature and so who considers himself independent, comes to know that he is subservient to paramatman (being related to Him as Dasa, Shishya, Prashishya, etc) and yearns to attain the Supreme Paramatman by performing the necessary spiritual discipline according to the teachings of the Acharya.

When and how one gets an Acharya ? Desika says

ईश्वरस्य च सौहार्दं यदृच्छासुकृतं तथा ।
विष्णोः कटाक्षमद्वेषं आभिमुख्यं च सात्विकैः
संभाषणं षडेतानि ह्याचार्यप्राप्तिहेतवः ॥

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"These six namely the good will of Paramatman, some good deed done by the chetana casually, the kind glance of Sri Vishnu, having no hatred towards the Lord, a turn towards the Lord and conversation with the satvik people are the causes of gaining an acharya".

On account of any one of these, a forlorn Jivatman will be blessed with the grace of an Acharya on account of the grace of the Lord, and saves himself by performing a spiritual discipline.

The benevolent Acharya enlightens him on his true nature as mentioned in the verse

नायं देवो न मर्त्यो वा न तिर्यक्स्थावरोऽपि वा ।
ज्ञानानन्दमयस्त्वात्मा शेषो हि परमात्मनः ॥

"This atman is not a god, a human being, not an animal nor an unmoving object. He is of the nature of knowledge and bliss and subservient to paramatman". The Acharya teaches him the nature of the Supreme Reality, the means and the goal very precisely without giving room for any doubt or wrong understanding. The essential nature and attributes of the ईश्वरand ईशितव्य, the nature of objects that are to be discarded such as earthly attainments and the attainments of other worlds, the objects that are to be cherished and achieved such as liberation and the means of attaining salvation and the nature of the obstacles to liberation - all these will be instructed by the compassionate preceptors. Here Acharya Sambandha is inevitable for one's emancipation. Every one is qualified for it and he will surely gain it at the proper time. All these truths are enshrined in the three great Rahasyas in a unique way and they will be expounded in the proper order further.

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CHAPTER - II

Saranishkarshadhikara
(Determining the essentials to be imbibed)

After giving a general introduction to the work proposed to be written, the celebrated author describes in this section, what an aspirant should determine as the most essential thing to be followed. One has to choose the most essential object to be followed without wasting time and choose that which is most beneficial to him, after due deliberation. Knowledge is vast; time at our disposal is very little. Obstructions for gaining knowledge are many. A wise man should not waste his precious time in indulging in various learnings. He has to determine what is of supreme essence and follow it devotedly. So, in this section, Desika decides what is of utmost value to mankind and exhorts one to proceed on the path of sadhana placing that as his goal.

In the introductory verse, Desika analyses the different kinds of knowledge and declares that the wise adopt with stout efforts the supreme truths expounded in the Upanishads. The Vedas are expounding the supreme truths that are most beneficial to mankind. They are the well wishers of mankind. 'मातापितृ सहस्रेभ्यो वत्सलतरं शास्त्रं' ।

The vedas are impersonal. They are Parama Pramanas. They are infallible truths. Anything which is opposed to the teaching of the Vedas, is just like poison leading to disaster. 'श्रुतिपथविपरीतं क्ष्वेलकल्पम्' । The Vedas contain teachings that are required for all kinds of people for gaining different objects. It is just like a vast reservoir meant for different

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kinds of purposes 'त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदाः'. They contain truths that are required for all kinds of people for attaining different objects of life here and hereafter. What all is said in the Vedas is not required for all "यावानर्थ उदपानेसर्वतः संप्लुतोदके । तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु, ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः" । says the Gita.

The Veda contains teachings that are required for gaining different aspirations. So, a Mumukshu who yearns to attain the supreme Paramatman, should not entertain such parts in the Veda that are leading to the attainment of Aishwarya and Kaivalya. He has to seek the supreme teachings that are the essence of the nectar of the Upanishads.

'प्रकृति पुरुष भोगप्रापकांशो न पथ्यः'

In this direction, the three mysterious viz. the Moolamanthra, Dwaya Manthra and Charama-sloka, are the quintessence of the teachings of the Upanishads and they are to be entertained with all effort and interest. A verse is quoted to emphasise this truth –

असारं अल्पसारं च सारं सारतरं त्यजेत् ।
भजेत् सारतमं शास्त्रे रत्नाकर इवामृतम् ॥

All those shasthras, that are beyond the Vedas, that do not admit the ultimate authority of the Veda or shastras that give a pervert interpretation of the Veda, are Asara. They must be totally discarded. The 'Alpasara' or 'a little essence' signifies the Poorva-Bhaga of the Veda, where different kinds of rites and karmas are prescribed as means of attainment of worldly benefits. This is also to be discarded as they are unhelpful to a Mumukshu. Those portions of the Veda that

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teach means of attaining benefits in the other worlds may be 'sara' for some people, as they have other worldly benefits. But, for a wise man, even those benefits are not to be entertained because they are दुःखमूल, दुःखमिश्र, दुःस्वोदर्क, अल्प and अस्थिर and opposed to the bliss of true nature of the atman. So, even the so called 'sara' is futile to a Mumukshu. Now the ideal of self-realisation where the self will enjoy Kaivalya or aloofness of the nature of the Atman, may be examined. This may be called 'Sara-thara' and may be desirable for many, as this is greater than the preceding ideals. But yet, this also is not an object of attainment for people who are yearning for the infinite bliss of communion with Paramatman. Se even this 'Sara-thara' is not the ideal to the cherished.

Those texts that expound the nature of Paramatman, the attainment of Paramatman and the means of attaining that supreme Paramatman – 'परमात्म स्वरूप, परमात्म प्राप्ति and परमात्म प्राप्त्युपाय - are of utmost importance and they form the supreme essence of the Vedas. They are the 'sarathama' portions. Even amongst them, the three Rahasyas that enshrine the essence of the tattva, hita and purushartha, are the 'sarathama' portions and they are to be entertained by all aspirants of liberation.

A wiseman should decide thus the quintessence of all shasthras and dedicate himself to the understanding of the three Rahasyas and this text expounds all the truths that are contained in the three Rahasyas.

बहुभ्यश्च महद्भ्यश्च शास्त्रेभ्यः मतिमान्नरः ।
सर्वतः सारमादद्यात् पुष्पेभ्य इव षट्पदः ॥

The meaning of this verse is that –

A mumukshu who wants to save himself from the clutches of samsara without delay, has to gather and devote himself to the most essential truths of these three mysteries 'Rahasyatraya' from all quarters; from all people; from all great shasthras – just like the bees that collect honey from all flowers.

It becomes established from all this enquiry that even from the Adhyathma Shastras that are 'sarathama' portions, a mumukshu should gather the most essential truths of these three Rahasyas. Desika expounds that the three Rahasyas enshrine the supreme essence of all vedic lore and a mumukshu ought to devote himself whole-heartedly to these three Rahasyas.

In the concluding verse in Tamil, Desika points out that the Acharyas of yore, imbibed the truths of these three mysteries and taught them to the line of their chosen disciples and this doctrine of 'sarathama' is valid and authoritative according to the unbroken tradition – 'अविच्छिन्नसंप्रदायः'।

The various disciplines of knowledge that are mastered by one in addition to what they have learnt, are all mere burdens. They will not be helpful for securing one's liberation from bondage. Our celebrated masters have taught us precisely that the three great mysteries are the quintessence of all vedic wisdom by means of which we can save ourselves.

Thus, in this section, Desika has ascertained what a Mumukshu should entertain, study and practise for attaining spiritual perfection without delay. This is the *Saranishkarsha*

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CHAPTER - III

Pradhana Prathithanthradhikara
(The unique doctrine of this School of Thought)

In the Saranishkarshadhikara, it was taught that the three Rahasyas are enshrining the ultimate truths of tatva, hita and purushartha and that an aspirant should endeavour to understand these truths as the quintessence of all the shasthras. In the following sections, these truths are elaborately described. Eight chapters are meant for enlightening the essential nature of the spiritual aspirant. The succeeding two chapters describe 'Sanga Prapadana'. The remaining ten sections are describing the beneficial aspects of Prapathi. The essential nature of the Adhikarin for Prapathi, actual performance of Prapathi and post-prapathi duties are thus described with all the essentials in this work.

Of all these, the foremost doctrine that is to be realised is introduced in this section of Pradhana Prathithanthra. Prathithanthra means 'unique doctrine' in this context. It is not 'prathikula-thanthra' or counter doctrine. It is not one found in each school as 'prathi-thanthram'. But, it is a unique doctrine that is taught in this school of thought only according to the authentic, authoritative and infallible sruthi. This doctrine is meant for enlightening the true nature of the individual self as utterly depending upon the supreme Paramatman for his very nature, existence and functioning. The Upanishads teach the relationship of the body and the soul, between the (Chetana - & - Achethana) sentient and non-sentient entities on one hand and the Supreme Paramatman on the other. If this doctrine of body and soul

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relationship between the universe and the Paramatman is clearly understood, then one will be able to imbibe the teachings of the scriptures. This is the most important doctrine which should be understood without any confusion for understanding the nature of the Ultimate Reality. It is therefore justified to teach this unique doctrine taught by the scriptures before teaching about the subject. The Adhikarin or aspirant of Prapathi should have a sound understanding of this relationship between him and Paramatman and he must have full conviction of this truth before undertaking any spiritual discipline. The school of Advaita teaches the doctrine of 'Adhyasa' or superimposition first and then introduces the teachings about Brahman, Jiva and the universe. When one becomes fully convinced about the fact that everything other than Brahman is superimposed on Brahman, he can then tread over the knowledge of other things and decide for himself that all things other than Brahman are illusory. Advaitins safeguard their doctrine like this, by first teaching that everything is superimposed on Brahman. Though this cannot be proved by any 'Pramana' whatsoever, the doctrine of 'Adhyaropa' and 'Apavada' influences the thought of all spiritual aspirants following the doctrine of Advaita.

All confusion ensues regarding determining the ultimate teachings of the Upanishads on account of non-determination of the inescapable relationship between the universe and supreme Brahman. The Upanishad itself teaches this doctrine of 'Sarira-Sariri-Bhava' any number of times to make one understand that the Supreme Brahman alone characterised by its body of the form of sentients and the non-sentients, is the One Non-Second Reality. This Body-Soul relationship is not a physiological one as found

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in the case of the soul and his physical body; but, it is a spiritual analogy to illustrate the fact that the universe is supported, ruled over at all times by the supreme and is used for the purposes of that supreme principle. This is the essence of the teaching of all Upanishads and this doctrine is to be known necessarily by all aspirants of liberation. If this relationship of utter dependence upon the supreme for existence and functioning of the universe is not realised, there cannot be any salvation. This Body-Soul relationship assures the reality of Brahman, Jivatman and Matter. The entities of Jivatman and Matter are entirely depending upon Paramatman. This doctrine harmonises all apparent contradictions and wards off the doctrine of unreality of the universe and the Jiva. Due importance is assigned to all kinds of scriptural statements and the glory of Brahman becomes expounded in significant terms. This school thus teaches the Reality of all the entities viz. Man, Matter and God, whereas other schools teach the unreality of one or all those entities discarding this Upanishadic doctrine.

Considering the importance of the understanding of this unique doctrine, Vedantha Desika has described this in Pradhanaprathithanthradhikara and has shown conclusively that this truth is enshrined in the three manthras before explaining other doctrines. The 'Sarira-Sariri-Bhava' is defined by Ramanuja in his Shri Bhashya as follows:-

'यस्य चेतनस्य यत् द्रव्यं सर्वात्मना स्वार्थे धारयितुं नियन्तुं च शक्यं तच्छेषतैकस्वरूपं च तत्तस्य शरीरम् । इतरः शरीरी'।

(श्रीभाष्यं २-१-९)

This truth is described in the introductory verse of this chapter.

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आधेयत्वप्रभृति नियमैः अदिकर्तुश्शरीरम्
सत्तास्थेमप्रयतनफलेष्वेतदायत्तमेतत् ।
विश्वं पश्यन्निति भगवति व्यापकादर्शदृष्टे
गम्भीराणां अकृतकगिरां गाहते चित्तवृत्तिम् ॥

The meaning of this verse is as follows:–

"On account of the invariable fact of being supported and others, this universe is the body of that first creator of this universe. This depends entirely on Him for its existence and functioning. When one realises these truths reflected in the mirror-like Moolamanthra and others, one will be able to know the heart of the profound Upanishads."

In this verse, Adheyathva, Niyamyathva and Sheshathva of the hosts of sentients and non-sentients is first of all mentioned. Adheyatwa means entirely depending upon the supreme for its essential nature and existence. The essential nature of the Jiva is entirely depending upon the nature of Paramatman. Niyamyatva signifies that the existence and functioning are depending upon the will of Paramatman. The Jivatma is thus 'Swarupa-Adhina' and 'Sankalpa-Adhina' to the Lord, though he is appearing to be independent.

All these truths are known from the three great Manthras. The 'Adhara-Adheya-Bhava' results in the realisation of one's inseparable relationship with the Supreme Lord i.e., 'Apruthaksidha Swarupa Labha'. The 'Shesha-Sheshi-Bhava' results in 'Swarupa-Anurupa-Purushartha-Bhava' i.e., seeking for an object of attainment which is in accordance with his true nature. The 'Niyanthru-Niyamya-Bhava' results in 'Nirapeksha-Upaya-Vishesha-Jnana' i.e., the knowledge of the particular means which does not need any other thing. All these lead to the

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understanding that the Supreme Lord is the ultimate object of attainment and that He alone is the means of that attainment.

The body-soul relationship between Paramatman and the other two entities viz., Jivatman and Matter, establishes that all entities other than Paramatman are supported, ruled over and used for his own purposes by the Paramatman. Three concepts are to be known from this:–

1. Adhara-Adheya Bhava
2. Niyamaka-Niyamya Bhava
3. Sheshi-Shesha Bhava

The Lord is, by his very nature – directly and immediately – Adhara (or support) to all substances (Dravya) other than himself, just as he is the Adhara (or Support) to his essential qualities such as Sathyatva, Jnanatva, Anantatva, Anandatva and Amalatva as well as the infinite auspicious attributes that are derived from these Swarupa Nirupaka Dharmas. How is he supporting the several attributes or Dharmas related to Matter and Jivatman? The Paramatman is the Adhara for those attributes that are related to these substances viz., Jivatman and Matter, through those very substances (Dravya-Dwara). For the bodies that are taken by the Jivatmans, the Lord is the Adhara through those Jivatmans. Some Acharyas opine that He supports their bodies indirectly through the Jivatmas, and also directly on account of his 'Swarupa'. From this, it is established that all entities other than Paramatman, are inseparable attributes as related to the essential nature of Paramatman. So the essential nature, the existence and functioning of all these entities are dependent upon

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Paramatman. The essential nature of all entities are dependent upon Paramatman, and therefore, things that are eternal and non-eternal are so, on account of the will of the Lord that wills their eternal nature or non-eternal nature. The will of the Lord is not to be taken as eternal or non-eternal. It must be known that some things will be eternal, if the Lord wills that they should be so. The 'Sthithi' or continuance of their existence also depends upon the 'Ichha' or the will of the Lord. So all entities other than Paramatman are 'Ishwara-Sankalpa-Ashritha'. The will of the Lord makes those entities 'Swarupa-Ashritha'. Thus all entities are both Ishwara Swarupa Ashritha and Ishwara Sankalpa Ashritha.

This can be understood from the analogy of the relationship of a Jivatman with his body. The body of the Jivatman is dependent upon the 'Swarupa' of Jivatman as we find that it gets destroyed missing the support of Jivatman, when he departs from the body. This fact of the Jivatman supporting the body can be known clearly in the state of 'sushupti' when there is no willing of the Jivatman. During the waking-state and the dream-state, the body is supported by the will of Jivatman. From this, we understand that the body of the Jivatman is supported through his wish during the waking-state and others in addition to his supporting the body through 'Swarupa'. So, it is pointed out that the body is 'Sankalpa-ashritha' and 'Swarupa-Ashritha'. Adheya signifies 'Swarupa-Ashraya'. 'Sankalpa-Ashraya' is signified by Niyamyathva. The body is Shesha or subservient to the interest of the Jivatman. So, it is Shesha-Bhava. In the same way, all entities other than Paramatman, are having the nature of Adheyatva, Niyamyatva and Sheshatva in respect of Paramatman. He is described as

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'Sarva-Sheshi' as he utilises for his own purposes all other entities by creating them, supporting them and accepting them, saving them and causing their essential nature to be like that. The Lord is the means of protection and also the object of attainment. So, He is Sarva-Adhara, Sarva-Niyamaka and Sarva-Sheshi.

How will this kind of relationship with Paramatman benefit the Jivatman?

1. From the realisation of the relationship of Adhara and Adheya, the Jivatman will realise his essential nature which is inseparable from the Paramatman, even as the qualities of 'Jnana' and 'Shakthi' are inseparable from the Paramatman. From this, he will gain the realisation of his true nature.

2. From the realisation of Shesha-Sheshi-Bhava, the Jivatman will develop an aspiration for gaining the object of attainment which is in accordance with his Swarupa. This results in the realisation of the Parama-Purushartha which is the attainment of Paramatman himself.

3. The realisation of the Niyanthru-Niyamya-Bhava will result in the realisation of the means of attainment which will be in accordance with his nature i.e., an 'Upaya' or means which will not depend upon any other factor. That 'Upaya' is the Supreme Lord himself., who is not depending on any other factor for becoming the 'Upaya'. So, this kind of relationship results in the realisation of the fact that the Jivatman is not supported by any one other than Paramatman (Ananya-Adhara), that he has no refuge other than Paramatman (Ananya-

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Sharana) and that the Supreme object of attainment is nothing other than attaining Paramatman (Ananya-Prayojana).

All these truths can be known from the three Rahasyas. The first Rahasya i.e. Mula Manthra, expounds that the Supreme Narayana is 'Ananya-Adhara'. This is established by means of the derivation of the term 'Narayana' through 'Tatpurusha' and 'Bahuvrihi' compounds as 'नाराणां अयनं' 'नाराः अयनम् यस्य सः' ।

From this, the 'Dharakatva' and 'Vyapakatva' of the Lord is understood. The 'Pranava' affirms that the Jivatman is in his essential nature, to subserve Paramatman alone and from this 'Ananya-Prayojanatvam' is ascertained. The middle term 'Namah' indicates utter dependence upon the Paramatman by means of the negation of the 'I' and the 'Mine'. From this, Ananya-Sharanatva is realised.

In the Dwaya-Manthra, the former part expounds the fact of Paramatman alone being the redeemer i.e., Ananya-Sharanatvam and the latter part teaches that the Paramatman alone is the supreme object of attainment i.e., Ananya-Prayojanatvam. Both these parts together expound Ananya Dharakatvam.

The Mula Manthra is just like a tiny mirror reflecting huge objects and it precisely expounds all truths that are to be known for performance of Prapathi that is ordained as the particular means of salvation, by the Charama Sloka for gaining the grace of Paramatman, the Siddhopaya.

The first word of this mantra is Pranava. The meanings of this are to be known as in the chariot of Arjuna and as

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shown in the verse of Ramayana "Rama walked first and Sita followed him next in the middle and Lakshmana followed them holding the bow and arrow".

The Charama Shloka ordains prapatti along with its accessories as the means of realisation and this is absolutely essential to enlighten ananya sharanatva – the fact of having Him alone as the protector. All these truths are thus taught by all the three mantras. A doubt may arise about the necessity of all the three mantras, as one mantra alone teaches all the things. The Mula-Mantra teaches no doubt, the means of prapatti. But, a visishta anusandhana is not possible from that. The Siddhopaya characterised by Goddess 'Sri' - Visishta-Siddopaya - and the prapya characterised by Goddess 'Sri' - Visishta-Prapya and सपरिकर वशीकरण विशेष or the particular means characterised by the several accessories – all these are not explicitly known from the Mula Manthra and so there is need of the Dvaya Manthra.

All things that are to be known necessarily while surrendering, such as Ananyarha-Sheshatva and Parathanthrya cannot be known clearly from anything other than 'Pranava' and 'Namas' of the Mula Manthra.

The illustration of the chariot of Arjuna points out primacy to Krishna who is in the fore (Sheshi) and subordination to Arjuna who is in the hind (behind) (Shesha). If 'उकार' is taken as signifying 'Sri', then the verse of Ramayana is an illustration. The Divine Couple who are the 'Sheshins' are in the front and they are followed by the 'Shesha', the subservient one, behind. This order also points the Rakshaka, Purushakara and the Rakshya in the respective

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order. The Namas signifies expressly Bhagavatpāratantram and indicates 'भागवत पारतन्त्र्यम्'। This is to be known from the instances of Bharatha and Shatrughna. The quote from the hymns of Alwars – "I am not without you, O Narayana; you are not without me" – signifies that my essential nature is entirely dependent upon you who are the Niyantha. You also are not yourself without me – 'नाराश्चाप्ययनं तस्य तैस्तद्भाव निरूपणात्' says Desika in Virodhaparihara. The derivation of the term Narayana shows the inseparable relationship between the two. He is to be known through his vibhuti 'विभूति निरूपकत्व' and the vibhuti is to be known as 'तदधीनस्थितिकत्व'।

The illustrations of 'Kosalajanapadasthajanthu' and Sri Rama of that place are given for explaining the meaning of the term Narayana. The people of the Kosala country could not bear themselves without Rama and so they went along with Rama when he made a mahaprasthana. Rama is to be indicated as Kosalendra. The sheshatva of the entities other than Paramatman, to Him, is to be known as extending up to the Bhagavatas that are devoted to the Lord.

The Sheshitva of Isvara is in respect of both chethana and achethana and so one should reflect that this sheshitva in respect of the chethana culminates in 'Swamitva' and similarly the 'sheshatva' of the chetana culminates in 'dasatva'.

On account of the fact of dasatva that is realised in respect of the chetana, the ultimate object of his attainment is determined to be Kainkarya or eternal loving service of the Lord.

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The Isvara is Nirupadhika-Sheshi, Nirupadhika-Niyantha and the Jivas are Nirupadhika-Shesha and Nirupadhika-Niyamya. The Master has to take care of his property. The capable one has to protect the helpless. But, according to his Sankalpa, he invariably engages the bound-chetanas in some upaya or other and on that pretext protects them.

Thus, in this section, the author has described the fundamental doctrine of body-soul relationship taught by the scriptures and has shown that all those truths are to be understood from the three mysteries.

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CHAPTER - IV

Artha Panchakadhikara

After expounding the unique doctrine of Body-Soul Relationship that is taught by the Upanishads, as an essential prerequisite for the doctrine of the means of surrender at the feet of the Lord, the five essential truths that also must be necessarily known by all, are taught in this section.

Desika describes that these essentials are taught in the three Rahasyas. The scripture mentions the essentials to be known in different ways such as, Isvara and Isithavya, Bhoktha-Bhogya-Preritha, one Supreme Brahman characterised by all other entities, etc. It is necessary for an aspirant to know first of all, his own nature, the object he cherishes to attain and the way of attaining it. He also should know what benefit he derives from the attainment of that object. When he makes an endeavour for attaining, he must be well aware of the impediments on his way also. Without a proper knowledge of these, one cannot proceed on the right line for the attainment of one's goal.

All philosophers generally mention that three things must be known viz. (1) Who I am? (2) What should I get? and (3) How can I get it? These three include in themselves, the fruit of such attainment and the hazards on the path of 'sadhana'.

These five factors are norms that can be applied to any philosophy or any religion. They are applicable to all. No progress can be made without knowing these five factors.

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The celebrated author of this work, has summarised in an introductory verse that all these five factors are suggested by the three Rahasyas. The five factors are as follows :-

आदौ प्राप्यं परममनघं प्राप्तृरूपं च मादौ
इष्टोपायस्त्वयननमसोः ईप्सितार्थं चतुर्थ्याम् ।
तद्व्याघातं ममकृतिगिरि व्यंजयन्तं मनुं तं
तत्प्रायं च द्वयमपिविदन् सम्मतः सर्ववेदी ॥

1. Supreme Paramatman characterised by all perfections is the object of attainment
2. The attainer is 'Jivatma'
3. The way of attainment is surrender unto Him
4. The fruit of attainment is the eternal bliss of loving service unto the Lord
5. Obstructions are of the form of attachment to the non-godly ideals as 'my' and the 'mine'. The feeling of 'I' and 'Mine' is an obstacle for this gain.

(a) In the letter 'Akara' and the word 'Narayana', – the Supreme Brahman – opposed to all defiling – is to be known.

(b) The letter 'Ma' in Pranava and the term 'Narah' found in Narayana, signify the attainer, the Jivatman.

(c) The term 'Ayana' in Narayana, and the middle term 'Namah', point out the Siddhopaya (Ayana) and the Sadhyopaya (Namah).

(d) The dative case 'आय' in the word 'Narayanaya' and the lupta chaturthi in the first letter 'Akara' of Pranava,

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point out that the desired object is perfect bliss of communion with Brahman.

(e) The impediment as pointed out by the letter 'Ma' in the term 'Namah', is of the form of Mamakara.

The means can be known by the other two Mantras viz. Dvaya and Charama-Sloka.

The masters of yore have taught these factors based on the vivid relationship of the form of Body-Soul Relationship between the Universe and the Lord. These six factors are universally accepted by all masters.

We may now make a study of these five truths, one after the other.

(A) When we reflect upon the Supreme, we must reflect upon Sriman Narayana, who is the Supreme Truth, who is inseparably associated with Goddess Mahalakshmi. The scriptures declare that Sriman Narayana is the Supreme Truth who is a home of all perfections, all auspicious qualities without any defilement whatsoever. Supreme Brahman is Sriman Narayana. He is ever united with Goddess Lakshmi in all his forms and even in his divine incarnations. The 'Sriyahpatitva' is a unique character of Supreme Brahman. Ramayana, Mahabharata and other scriptures and the Alwars describe Him as inseparably associated with Goddess Lakshmi.

श्रिया सार्धं जगप्पतिः - (पररूप)

'एष नारायणः श्रीमान् क्षीरार्णवनिकेतनः' (व्यूह रूप)

'भवान् नारायणो देवः श्रीमान् चक्रायुधो विभुः' (विभव)

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'ब्रह्मणि श्रीनिवासे' says Ramanuja. The Alwars also describe that Sri is inseparable from the Supreme Paramatman.

Vedanta Desika mentions 'Sriyahpativa' first while describing the essential nature of Brahman, because 'Sri' is determining his essential nature. She is Swarupa Nirupaka. Desika mentions authorities that show 'Sri' as inseparably associated with Narayana in Para; Vyuha and Vibhava forms.

One should meditate upon Paramatman as ever associated in all ways in all states and in all forms with Goddess Mahalakshmi inseparably.

(B) Brahman - Sriman Narayana – is of the essential nature of Jnana, Ananda, Sathya, Anantha and Amala. He is opposed to all that is defiling. The great scriptures, Upanishads, the utterances of Alwars and the experiences of our Holy Masters, declare that He is 'Saguna' and never 'Nirguna'. Of these infinite qualities, six qualities i.e., Jnana, Shakti, Balam, Aishwaryam, Veeryam and Tejas are prominently noted. The Supreme Brahman should be thought of as characterised by the qualities of 'Supremacy' and 'Accessibility' that are necessary for 'Prapya' and 'Prapakatva'.

The following authorities show His Supreme nature – 'समस्तहेयरहितं विष्ण्वाख्यं परमं पदम्' – The Supreme object of attainment is Sri Vishnu who is divested of all that is defiling'. 'निवासवृक्षः साधूनां आपन्नानां परागतिः'। He is a tree giving shelter to the virtuous and he is the Supreme saviour of those who are in trouble'.

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'तेजोबलैश्वर्यमहावबोध सुवीर्यशक्त्यादि गुणैकराशिः' ।

He is the one repository of all auspicious qualities like Tejas, बल, ऐश्वर्य, दान, वीर्य, शक्ति and others'. 'Even if one has long life like the chaturmukha, and has one crore of mouths, and of pure devotional mind, he cannot even mention one thousandth part of his auspicious qualities'.

(C) The Supreme Brahman should be thought of as associated with an eternal auspicious body. It is eternal and ashraya to all entities. His auspicious form is अप्राकृत or non material. 'न भूतसंघसंस्थानः देहोऽस्य परमात्मनः' ।

(D) The Supreme Narayana should be reflected upon as existing in five forms viz. Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Harda and Archa. He should be reflected upon as characterised by infinite 'vibhuties' and as engaged in the process of creation, protection, destruction, etc., and as the supreme cause of every other thing.

Thus the object of attainment प्राप्यस्वरूप should be reflected upon.

The nature of the Prapya Swarupa or the object of attainment, has been ascertained according to the scriptural authorities such as the Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, the Agamas and the Divya Prabandhams.

The details and characteristics of these five fold natures of the Lord, are ascertained from the Agamas that are authoritative as Veda itself, as they are not contradictory to the teachings of the Veda. This aspect of possessing a Divya Mangala Vigraha, is also to be meditated upon as related to the Prapya.

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The Prapya or the object of attainment – Sriman Narayana – is characterised by the two 'vibhuties' or glories such as the 'Leela Vibhuti' and the 'Nitya Vibhuti'. The 'Nitya Vibhuti' or the Paramapada or Vaikunta, is never involved in the process of creation and destruction etc. The 'Leela Vibhuti' i.e., the universe, comprising of matter and the bound selves is subjected to origination and destruction. All these are necessarily dependent upon the infallible will of the Supreme.

The second factor of the five factors to be known, is Jivatman, who has to attain the Supreme Lord. The Jivatman is called a 'Kshetrajna', who is to attain the Lord. The order of the Jivatmans is further classified into three categories – the bound-self, the liberated-self and the eternals.

The 'Baddhas' or bound-selves, are those who are associated with matter from beginningless time and who have to strive for getting rid of the bondage of Karma, by practising the spiritual disciplines as prescribed in the Shastras, and who are fit to enjoy the eternal communion with the divine.

The Muktas or the 'Liberated' are those who have endeared themselves to the Lord by the performance of spiritual disciplines as ordained by the Shastras, and who have got rid of the association of 'Samsara' totally and who are enjoying the infinite bliss of divine communion.

The Nityas or the 'Eternals' – are those who like Isvara, are ever remaining without contraction of knowledge and who are ever engaged in the eternal service of the Lord from beginningless time. All these Jivatmans are having the

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common characteristics of Anutva, Jnantva, Anandatva, Amaltva, Bhagavat-Seshatva and Bhagavatha-Paratantrya.

The essential nature of the Jivatman is to be reflected in मकार and the term नरः and in the usage of the verbs 'Prapadye' and 'Vraja' and the term त्वा and in the sentence 'माशुचः' in the three Rahasyas.

The 'Praptyupaya – 'प्राप्त्युप्य' is pointed out by the term 'Namah' and 'Ayana' in the Mulamantra and in the poorvakhanda of the Dvayamantra and also in the first half of the 'Charama-Sloka'. The Upaya or the way of attainment of Paramatman, is ascertained as total Surrender unto the Lord with the realisation of one's own utter helplessness. Surrender unto the Lord with supreme faith or Maha-Vishvasa in his Grace, along with one's own helplessness, will certainly win the grace or 'Prasada' of the Lord on account of which one will get rid of the bond of karma and association with matter.

The 'Phala-Swarupa' or the fruit of such surrender unto the Lord is the obtainment of the eternal, infinite bliss of communion with the Lord, which culminates in the loving service unto the Lord. The Jivatman will realise his true nature and will subserve only the purposes of the divine and never thinks of his own benefit. This is to be meditated upon in the terms of the Mulamantra viz. 'Narayanaya' and 'Aya' in Pranava where the dative case is latent. The statement सर्व पापेभ्यो माक्षयिष्यामि of the Charama-slóka is also pointing out the nature of the 'Phala'.

Desika has described elaborately the nature of the obstacles on the way of attainment of Godhead, because,

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the realisation of these impediments is very necessary for a devoted spiritual career and a genuine turn in life for attainment of Godhead. The host of obstacles to realisation can be said to be of the form of Avidya, Karma, Vasana, Prakriti Sambandha and Ruchi. The bound-self has been made to contact matter which causes the contraction of his Dharma-Bhuta-Jnanam on account of his transgression of divine command from beginningless time. Even when he is born as a human being on account of some good act whatsoever, he is liable to be disturbed and confused by counter forces of various views of life and he may not have an opportunity to seek and surrender unto the Lord. He is tempted by the objects of the senses and he is likely to get distracted from the right path. One has to be very careful and should not indulge in the pleasures of the senses. He has to develop dispassion and choose only a virtuous path. There is a hurdle at every step and he has to steer clear himself from all these obstacles and should have before him the one and only goal of the attainment of the divine. Even while practising upasana, he should not be tempted by the lower gains of life, such as wealth or fame or long life or even the bliss of self-experience or Kaivalya. A spiritual aspirant should realise that he can get rid of all these obstacles only by surrendering unto the Lord and only by a strong conviction that all attainments other than the divine, are little and transient.

Thus in this chapter, Vedantha Desika has described the Arthapanchaka Jnanam which is the essence of all Shastras i.e., the essence of the Upanishads, Divya-Prabandham and all philosophical speculations. What is needed here is that these five factors should be determined according to the shastras.

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The gist of this section is summarised in one verse to the end of this chapter as follows:-

प्राप्यं ब्रह्म समस्तशेषिपरमं प्राप्ताहमस्योचितः

प्राप्तिः दायधन क्रमादिह मम प्राप्ता स्वतः सूरिवत् ।

हन्तैनामतिवृत्तवानहं अहंमत्या विमत्याश्रयः

सेतुः संप्रति शेषिदम्पति भरन्यासस्तु मे शिष्यते ॥

The object of attainment is the Supreme Brahman, that is by nature the "sheshin" of all and that is most celebrated on account of all perfections without any defilement. I am the one who am fit to attain him by virtue of my essential nature of consciousness, purity and others. The attainment is just like the attainment of paternal property by his son and others. Even as in the case of the eternals I am the attainer on account of my essential nature Alas ! I transgressed this attainment by my own fault of the form of ego and ignorance.

Now, when I have been enlightened by the Acharyas, surrender unto the Divine Couple, the sheshins, is the only way to save myself.

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CHAPTER - V

Tatvatrayadhikara

Our Masters of yore have classified the categories in various ways, for making the disciples understand the truth clearly without any confusion. The different kinds of categorisation are not contradicting one another. The oneness of Paramatman characterised by the orders of the chetana and the achetana i.e. 'चिदचिद्विशिष्टं ब्रह्म' is admitted by all. The difference and distinction between Brahman and the other two orders, is also admitted by all. To make the student understand the unique characteristics of the 'Prakara' or the attributes, tatva is classified into six sub-divisions such as the 'Arthapanchaka' and the unique relationship of the 'Body-Soul'. Likewise, tatva can be classified into two categories such as 'Isvara' and 'Ishithavya', or it may be classified into three categories as declared by the scriptures viz., Bhoktha, Bhogyam and Preritha'. It may be classified into twenty-six divisions, twenty-four divisions of matter such as Prakriti, Mahath, etc., twenty-fifth category being the Jivatman, and the twenty-six being Paramatman. In every kind of categorisation, an aspirant will realise the true nature of the matter, Jivatman and the Supreme Paramatman.

It is to be known that all entities other than Paramatman are real and subordinated to Him as His inseparable attribute. Paramatman is one supreme Reality, who is all independent and the one supreme ruler over all other entities. The existence, the essential nature and functioning of all sentient and non-sentient entities, other

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than Paramatman, are subordinated to that one Supreme Paramatman. This fact is admitted by all thinkers who have described the nature and number of categories differently.

In the previous section, the five factors such as the nature of the Prapya and others and the unique relationship between Paramatman and others were taught expressly. Then, where is the need for introducing this section dealing with the three tatvas viz., Prakriti, Jivatman and Paramatman? This verily forms a part of Arthapanchaka. The answer to this question is given by Vedantha Desika in the preliminary verse and further explanation of the meaning of the verse. Every aspirant has to get rid of three powerful illusions –

1. The illusion that the body itself is the Atman. This is known as 'देहात्मभ्रमः'।
2. The illusion that the Jivatman is all independent and not subordinated to anyone. This is known as 'स्वतन्त्रात्म भ्रान्तिः'।
3. The illusion, Most Harmful, that there is no Isvara at all, who is the creator, protector and destructor, and that all the activities of the universe are going on according to their nature. This is known as 'अनीश्वर वादः'।

These three illusions should be cleared and every aspirant has to realise that they are the most formidable impediments, obstructing the path of spiritual sadhana. So, Desika has devoted a chapter here before coming to the subject of the main topic viz., Prapatti, so that one may be well aware of the nature of these three entities. Only when one is equipped with the correct understanding of these

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three entities, one will be a genuine aspirant after liberation. He will be an adhikarin for practising spiritual discipline.

So Desika introduces this chapter with this preliminary verse.

प्रकृत्यात्मभ्रान्तिर्गलति चिदचिल्लक्षणधिया
तथा जीवेशैक्यप्रभृतिकलहः तद्विभजनात् ।
अतो भोक्ता भोग्यं तदुभयनियन्तेति निगमैः
विभक्तं नः तत्त्वत्रयमुपदिशन्त्यक्षतधियः" ।

The gist of this verse is as follows: –

"By understanding the distinct features of the sentient and the non-sentient entities properly, the illusion of the Atman as the body will vanish. Similarly, by understanding properly the difference and distinction between Isvara and Jivatman, the confusion of the oneness of Jivatman and Paramatman will disappear. The Masters of yore, therefore, teach the three realities as classified by the scriptures as the 'Bhoktha', or the enjoyer, 'the Bhogya', or the object of enjoyment, and the 'Preritha' or the ruler over both these entities."

In this chapter, Desika has dealt with the nature and characteristics and functioning of these entities both sentient and non-sentient, along with the nature and functioning of Isvara in a remarkably brief manner. The nature, definition and characteristics of these three entities, have been dealt with elaborately supported by dialectrical discussions in great works like Nyaya-Siddanjanam, Tatvamuktakalapam, Nyaya Parisuddhi and other works. The summaries of conclusions arrived at in those monumental works, are given here in a brief manner to serve the general purposes of an aspirant.

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The aim of this section is not to deal with all these entities exhaustively in all their aspects, but to point out the most essential truths that are inevitable for having a firm understanding of these truths to enable one to take up to the path of spiritual perfection.

Desika mentions the statement of Yamuna, quoted by Ramanuja viz., स्वाधीन त्रिविधचेतनाचेतनस्वरूप स्थितिप्रवृत्तिभेदं' and endeavours to explain in detail the meanings and implications of this statement. This statement of Yamuna is mentioned by Ramanuja also. This expounds the nature of the three entities in a nutshell. The three kinds of sentients are the 'Bound', 'Liberated' and the 'Eternal'. The three achetanas are 'Triguna Dravya' (Matter having three qualities), 'Time' and 'Shuddha-Satva'. Swarupa means the essential nature of the 'Dharmi' that is qualified by its unique characteristics. 'Sthithi' means continuance in time. This is of two kinds. Eternal entities last for eternal time. The non-eternal entities continue to exist subject to the will of the Lord, for such period. 'Pravritthi' means functioning. This is of two forms – Positive (Pravritthi) and Negative (Nivritthi). All these entities are established according to the relevant pramanas. The prime subject of this chapter is briefly expounded in this significant statement. The Svarupa, Sthiti and Pravrithi of all the three kinds of sentients and non-sentients and their differences are subordinated to the supreme Paramatman.

It is to be noted that the 'Pramanas' show always the essential nature of the several entities along with their characteristics (Dharma). There is absolutely no room for an undifferentiated object. The qualities determining the essential nature of the entities are called 'Swarupa-Nirupaka-

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Dharmas'. The host of qualities that are derived from the 'Swarupa-Nirupaka-Dharmas are called 'Nirupita-Swarupa-Visheshanas'. This chapter is a clear exposition of this significant statement.

Nature of Jivatman

Jivatman has the essential characteristics of Jnanatva, Anandatva, Amalatva, Anutva and Sheshatva or subservience to the Lord. It is not subservient to any other person than Isvara. This 'Sheshatva' is a *'Swarupa-Nirupaka-Dharma'*. The Jivatman can be defined as शेषत्वेसति चेतनत्वम्' ।

The Jivatman is self – revealing. He can know himself by his essential nature. He can know other things through his 'Dharma Bhuta Jnana'. His subservience to the Lord is signified in the first letter of 'Pranava' and by the term 'Narayana' in the dative case. This subservience of the Jivatman to the Lord, culminates in his subservience to the Bhagavatas also.

The 'Pravritthi' of Jivatman is dependent upon the Lord i.e. Paradhina. The enjoyership and the doership of the Jivatman are dependent upon the Lord, and have been granted to the Jivatman for subserving the purposes of the Lord himself.

The 'Bound-Soul' is associated with matter on account of his beginningless past karma of the form of transgression of the divine command. He is bound to Avidya, Karma-Vasana and Prakriti-Sambandha. There are infinite number of jivas. There is difference between one Jiva and another Jiva in the experience of their knowledge and happiness. The very many chetanas or Jivatmans are ranging from the four-faced-Brahma to the tiny worm. Though their essential

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nature of jnanatva, anandatva and anutva, is equal to one another, their Dharma Bhuta Jnana differs from Atman to Atman. All these Jivatmans are endowed with bodies according to their Karma and the Jivatman supports its body through his essential nature and also through Dharma Bhuta Jnanam. During the 'walking' state, the chetanas support their body and function through it for adoption of spiritual practices and for attainment of objects of life. At the time of 'sushupthi', the Jivatman supports the body through the essential nature or Dharmi-Swarupa. When they are 'liberated', their Dharma Bhuta Jnana will be helpful for rendering loving service to the Lord and for experiencing the bliss of divine communion.

The 'Bound-Jivas' are 'Baddhas', migrating in this universe from birth to birth till they are 'liberated'. They will be functioning virtuously or viciously, or in a way which is neither good nor bad. The 'liberated' souls manifest in their real nature and they will by serving the Lord according to their desire for all times to come, enjoying the bliss of divine communion.

The 'eternals' are distinguished from the other two categories of bound-selves and liberated-selves in the aspect of never contacting with 'matter' at any time. From beginningless time, their true nature is ever manifested and their subservience to the Lord, their dependence upon the Lord and their experience of the Lord for all times to come, are experienced without any limitation. Their 'Pravritthi-vishesha' is to render all kinds of services to the Lord from beginningless time for all times to come.

The 'Nityas' are rendering distinguished and particular services to the Lord. They are Anantha, Garuda,

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Vishwaksena and others. Each one serves the Lord in a particular way and the rest of them experience the same delight without any difference.

The nature of the chetanas or the Jivatmans is thus explained in such a way, as it becomes useful to a sadhaka, to evolve his spiritual discipline.

Attributive Consciousness (or Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam)

This is not mentioned separately as this happens to be included in the essential nature of the chetana or the atman. This is a unique doctrine which is admitted according to the authority of the scriptures. The scriptures declare that the atman is a Kartha, Bhoktha, Vijnatha. This knowership or doership signifies this attributive consciousness. As other philosophers have not admitted this entity of attributive consciousness, they find it difficult to explain the fact of knowledge. The 'Sankhyas' and 'Advaitins' attribute knowledge to the mind or 'Anthahkarana' which is inert. They say knowledge is superimposed on the inert Anthahkarana. For them, the atman is pure consciousness without the fact of knowership. In the school of 'Vishistadvaita' the atman is of the essential nature of Jnanam or Jnana-Swarupa and it has the inseparable attribute of Jnanam or Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam. The atman is a 'Prathyak' principle i.e., a self revealing entity. The atman knows itself as an 'Anukula', and as one and of the nature of bliss. Swarupa-Jnana can know itself; but, it cannot show other things. Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam is an inseparable attribute of the atman. It shows itself and other objects also to its 'Ashraya' or the self at the time of showing the objects (Vishaya-Prakashana-Kala).

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This Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam also is 'Swayam-Prakasha' and does not require any other thing to make itself known. It is 'Ubhaya-Nirvahaka'.

All atmans including Paramatman are qualified by this Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam. This attributive consciousness is subject to contraction and expansion during the state of 'samsara' for the bound-souls.

When the bound-self liberates himself from the bondage (of samsara) by the grace of the Lord, his Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam assumes its proper proportions and is not subjected to contraction at any time. The Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam of Nityas or the eternal ones and Paramatman is, from beginningless time, all pervasive and never subjected to any contraction whatsoever. This Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam illumines all objects to its source, the ashraya and will be helpful for supporting the body, when he is in the waking and the dream state. The 'Sutraka' declares that the atman has knowership in the sutra 'ज्ञः अतएव' (V.S.2-3-19) and 'तद्गुणसारत्वात् तद्व्यपदेशः' (V.S.2-3-29).

This Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam is a substance as it is subjected to contraction or expansion. But it is an inseparable and eternal attribute of the atman, and it is existing even in the state of 'sushupti'.

All atmans will be undergoing the experience of several objects either as agreeable or disagreeable, according to their karma. All objects in the world are the glory or vibhuti of the Lord and are agreeable always to the eternals, the liberated and Ishwara. All things are always agreeable to them. But, for the bound-selves, these objects of the world, will be agreeable to some extent or disagreeable, or neither

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agreeable nor disagreeable according to their respective karmas and also according to the differences of times or persons or places. This kind of disagreeability is entirely due to the fact that the Supreme Paramatman is apportioning the results according to the respective karmas of those people. This is the mode of awarding the results of karmas by the Supreme Lord who is Satya-Sankalpa. The bound-souls are experiencing the results of their karma and for that they are having Swarupa-Yogyata and Sahakari-Yogyata. All Jivatmans are subordinated to the Lord and therefore, they have Swarupa-Yogyata for experiencing the phala given by the Lord. As they have transgressed the command of the Lord and have committed an offence that way, they have Sahakari-yogyata also. For the eternals and the liberated, though they have Swarupa-Yogyata, they are not having Sahakari-Yogyata because of the absence of transgression of the divine command. The Lord is the ruler over all others and he is not answerable to any other person and so he has neither Swarupa-Yogyata nor Sahakari-Yogyata. It can be noted from this, that there is nothing like disagreeable and evil really, but certain things appear disagreeable to us on account of our own past karma.

The essential nature or Swarupa of all atmans including Ishvara, is self-luminous to the respective atmans. The Dharmi-Swarupa never undergoes contraction even while one is bound by samsara. It is ever pure. It is of the nature of consciousness and bliss whereas the Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam or the attributive consciousness is self-luminous only at the time of illumining the objects to its source.

Jnanatva and Swayam-Prakashatva are common to substantive consciousness and attributive consciousness. The

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Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam cannot know itself – but it can show itself and other things – to its ashraya. The Dharmi-Jnanam or Swarupa-Jnanam cannot show anything but it can know itself. Therefore, they become objects of knowledge along with their attributes like Nityatva, Vibhutva or Anutva through the extension of different knowledges gained from the shastra and others. As this school has admitted both these kinds of knowledge, the fact of generation of knowledge can be explained according to experience and the shastras.

Achetana Tatva (or Non-sentient substance)

The achetana or non-sentient substance is not conscious of itself. It is not a substratum or locus of knowledge. It reveals itself only to others. This is known as 'Parak-Tatva' or an entity that shows itself only to others. These two characteristics of (1) not knowing itself and (2) revealing itself only to others, are common to all the non-sentient principles and Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam. Dharma-Bhuta Jnanam is considered as Swayam-Prakasha or self-luminous, though non-sentient, as it does not require any other thing for showing itself. This achetana or non-sentient principle is of three kinds viz., Prakriti, Kala and Shuddha-satva. Matter and Time are inert and not self-luminous. Shudda-satva is self-luminous, though not a conscious entity according to the views of the Agamas. It is not self-revealing to those who are bound by karma and who are associated with matter. But, it is self-revealing to the eternals and the liberated and the Supreme Ishvara.

These three non-sentient entities are functioning according to the will of the Lord and they undergo modification to form different entities. Matter or Substance

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that is characterised by the three gunas is undergoing change incessantly. Matter is an ashraya to the three gunas, and it is further classified into the twenty four categories such as Mula-Prakriti, Mahat, Ahankara, eleven indriyas, five tanmatras and the five elements. When all these three qualities are in the state of equilibrium (साम्य) then ensures Maha-Pralaya. When these three qualities are existing in different proportions, creation and sustenance happen. The primordial matter or Mula-Prakriti is infinite in proportion except in the place where the supreme eternal paramapada or abode of the Lord exists. The primordial matter will be undergoing change incessantly to result in the form of Mahat, Ahankara and others. In such areas where there happens to be a variation in respect of the qualities viz. Satva, Rajas and Tamas, all such wonderful transformations happen only according to the will of Ishvara and it is to be known that matter is also Brahmatmaka and that it is incapable of functioning independently. The several categories under matter are described differently according to the fact of laying emphasis on certain aspects. This trigunam or Prakriti which is a non-sentient substance, which is not self-aware, is spoken of as Akshara, Mula-Prakriti, Avidya or Maya.

This प्रकृति also is an eternal entity just like the Jivatman, but ever changing in its nature. This matter is the substance that marvellously transforms itself into the form of wonderful objects of this universe. This happens to be an inseparable attribute of the Supreme Paramatman both in its causal state and effected state. All these twenty-four entities are different from one another on account of their respective characteristics.

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The 'Asthrabhushanaadhyaya' describes in a metaphorical way that all these twenty-four categories along with the order of jivatman, are represented in the form of weapons and ornaments of the Lord. This metaphorical description is to point out that both the sentient and the non-sentient principles are ever subordinated to the will of the Lord and that they function only according to His will.

This triguna-dravya or Matter forms the body of the bound-jivatmans in different forms and the external world forming different aspects such as the mountains, rivers and trees and innumerable other forms. When a person gets rid of his beginningless karma due to the grace of the Lord, his contact with 'Matter' comes to an end, and he will escape from the clutches of 'Matter'.

Matter is thus responsible for the functioning of the baddha-chetanas for gaining the experience of the world as well as gaining liberation. Through the qualities of Rajas and Tamas, Matter becomes the cause of Viparita-Jnana or perverse knowledge about the entities by covering the reality. It is then called 'Maya' as it hides the true nature of the jivatman as well as paramatman and it causes the idea of enjoyership in the experience of the sense objects. The same matter, when there is enhancement of the quality of satva, helps a chetana by illumining the reality as it is, and causes him to gain liberation. All these activities of matter are according to the will of the Lord and for the Leelarasa or Joy of the Lord. The Lord is ever compassionate and helpful but he waits for an inclination from the Jivatman to be saved. The jivatman will win the grace of the Lord on account of some good done knowingly or unknowingly and liberate himself from the bondage of matter. It is impossible

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to get rid of the clutches of matter by one's own effort without the grace of the Lord.

Shuddha Satva

Shuddha satva is the achetana dravya which is the asraya of pure satvaguna, unmixed with rajas or thamas. This takes the form of the eternal objects such as mantapa, gopura and other objects and the bodies of Isvara, nityas and muktas according to the will of Paramatman. They will be eternal if the Lord wills that they be eternal or non-eternal if they are willed to be so. All these different effects will be the भोगोपकरण to the sarvasheshin. This is useful to the shesha bhutas such as nityas and muktas as an instrument for divine service. As this shudhha satva is unmixed with rajas or tamas it will never obstruct origination of true knowledge and it illumines the nature of the Supreme Paramatman eminently. Though this is not a pratyak principle it is self - luminous just like Dharma bhuta jnanam.

Kala (or Time)

Kala or Time is also a 'Jada' dravya or inert substance. This is perceived by all organs at the time of perceiving several objects. Kala can be known only as associated with the several objects. It cannot be known apart from the objects. It is eternal. The Upanishad says 'Agre' as related to creation. Kala exists before creation and even after pralaya. It is necessarily related to the world here and it is found also in Nitya Vibhuti. It is Jada and all - pervasive. There is the division of Kala into Khanda-Kala and Mahakala. Mahakala qualifies all objects of all the worlds and is all - pervasive. Similarly, Khanda-kala is in the form of Kshana (moment), Lava (as aspect), Day, Night, Month, etc., and it is subject

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to modification. But the modification here is not a change in the nature of the entity. This modification is not in form of clay that undergoes change in its essential nature, but it is in the aspect of attaining a different state. The change in Kala is in the aspect of change in the number of 'Kshanas' or Muhurthas etc. So many kshanas or moments make one muhurtha and so many muhurthas make one day, so many days make one month, so many months make one year. In this way, time – though one and all - pervasive – attains different states on account of various duration's that are counted in relation to the several objects; and the objects qualified by such states are called 'Anitya' or non-eternal. This Time or Kala is found even in Paramapada, and it does not limit the objects there, but is subordinated to the will of the Lord.

Doctrine of Ishvara

The essential nature, the continuance of nature and the functioning of all entities enumerated above are dependent upon the essential nature and will of the Supreme Paramatman. All these entities are existing is their essential nature only on account of the existence of Ishvara. This is known as Swarupashrita. Likewise, the functioning of all these entities is dependent upon the sankalpa or the will of Paramatman. So, they are sankalpashrita.

Ishvara or the Supreme Paramatman is the prime doctrine or all scriptures. All philosophers except the charuvakas, the sankhyas, admit Ishvara and assign him a place in their doctrines. It is only Ramajuna's school that propounds Ishvara faithfully according to the scriptures and assign him the highest place. The schools of Yoga, Nyaya

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and Mimamsa – though admit Ishvara – have not assigned the proper place for him. They give a lower status to Ishvara. Even amongst Vedantic Schools, it is Vishistadvaita that gives him proper importance and assigns the due status as ordained in the scriptures. The school of Advaita designates Ishvara as Aparabrahma by ranking him lower than the higher Brahman which they call undifferentiated consciousness. Even in the school of Madhva, Ishvara is admitted only as an instrumental cause of this universe and not as the material cause. They posit non-difference between Ishvara and his qualities.

Ishvara is the one supreme doctrine, who is expounded in all scriptures, Agamas and the Divyaprabhandams. The school of Vishistadvaita establishes Ishvara as the most supreme being who is the support, the ruler and the sheshin of all other entities. Ishvara is necessarily 'Saguna' and never nirguna. The essential nature of Ishvara is described as follows:–

1. He is inseparably qualified by the essential qualities of Satya, Jnana, Ananta, Ananda and Amala. These qualities determine his essential nature. These are called Swarupa-Nirupaka-Dharmas. It is ordained in the scriptures that while meditating upon Ishvara, one should do so as qualified by all these Swarupa-Nirupaka-Dharmas.

2. All other auspicious qualities such as Bala, Virya, Tejas, Sousheelya, Vathsalya, Mardva and others and various Vibhutis and the divine auspicious forms are all derived from the essential nature described above. They are called Nirupita-Swarupa-Visheshanas or particular qualities derived from the essential nature. Of these

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auspicious qualities the six qualities (or shadgunas) known as Jnana, Bala, Aishvarya, Virya, Shakti and Tejas are qualities that point out his supremacy. Qualities such as Sousheelya, Vathsalya, Mardava, Arjava and a host of others are establishing the accessibility of the supreme. All these infinite qualities are at all times dependent upon His essential nature. Of these six prime qualities, it is said that in the incarnation of 'Vyuha' (such as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) two - two qualities are prominently noticed and the other qualities are unmanifested. This is expounded in the Agamas. It is said that all these six qualities are manifested in the vyuha Vasudeva and the two qualities such as Bala and Jnanam are manifested in the incarnation of Sankarshana by means of which he actuates 'Pralaya' and 'Shastra-Pravartana'. Two qualities viz., Aishvarya and Virya are manifested in the incarnation of Pradhyumna and are useful in creation of this universe and also promulgation of Dharma. Two qualities of Shakthi and Tejas are manifested in the vyuha incarnation of Aniruddha and these qualities are helpful in rendering protection and tatva-jnana-pradana.

षाड्गुण्यात् वासुदेवः परइति स भवान् मुक्तभोग्यो बलाढ्यात्
बोधात्संकर्षणस्त्वं हरसि वितनेषु शास्त्रमैश्वर्य वीर्यात् ।
प्रद्युम्नस्स्र्गधर्मौ नयसि च भगवान् शक्तितेजोनिरुद्धः
बिभ्राणः पासि तत्त्वं गमयसि च तथा व्यूह्य रंगाधिराज ॥

(रंगराजस्तवः उत्तरशतक श्लोक - ३९)

All the vyuhas have always these six qualities, but in the respective vyuhas the respective two qualities are made

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patent while others are latent. The five forms of the supreme are Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Harda and Archa. The 'Para' is the form of the supreme residing in the highest abode of Paramapada. The 'Vyuha' incarnation is described as comprising four vyuhas, when the Vasudeva-Vyuha is counted separately. As the Vasudeva-Vyuha is the same as Para-Vasudeva or the Para-Roopa, it is sometimes described as having three forms only. These different forms of the one Supreme Lord, characterised by all infinite auspicious qualities, are meditated upon by different kinds of upasakas. From these four main vyuhas, the twelve sub-vyuhas such as Keshava, Narayana and others are derived.

The Vibhava-Avataras are historical incarnations related to particular places and times, and causes. In these incarnations, the Lord manifests himself with the desired qualities and hides certain qualities. The ten incarnations are most prominent (such as the divine fish and others) among these historical incarnations.

Lord Krishna has taught the secret of the Divine incarnations in the Gita. The divine incarnations are (1) real; (2) there is no diminution of knowledge or essential nature of the Lord in the incarnations; (3) the bodies of the Lord in incarnations will be of 'Shuddha-Satva' or pure satva and never material comprising of the three gunas; (4) the cause of Divine incarnation is His own will or sankalpa and not karma as in the case of others; (5) the time of incarnation is the time when He has to protect Dharma; (6) the purpose of Divine incarnation is Sadhu-paritrana or protecting the Godly ones by granting his communion. The Lord declares in the Gita that one who has realised this secret knowledge of the incarnation (Avatara Rahasya Jnanam) would gain

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liberation at the end of that birth alone and that he would not be born again.

Similarly the Archavatara is of great significance. One who devotes himself to the worship of the Archa incarnation, would gain liberation without heavy strain. This form of the Lord is easily accessible to all at all times unlike other forms of the Lord. Shounaka ordains thus –

सुरूपां प्रतिमां विष्णोः प्रसन्नवदनेक्षणाम् ।
कृत्वात्मनः प्रीतिकरीं सुवर्णरजतादिभिः ॥
तामर्चयेत्तां प्रणमेत् तां यजेत्तां विचिन्तयेत् ।
विशत्यपास्तदोषस्तु तामेव ब्रह्मरूपिणीम् ॥

"Making a beautiful idol of Sri Mahavishnu having beautiful features as eyes, face and graceful looks, out of gold or silver or others, one should worship the Lord, bow down to Him, surrender unto Him, meditate upon Him; such a one freed from all blemishes is sure to attain that Supreme Paramatman."

Of all forms of the Lord, the Archa is most easily accessible and most significant. The great Alwars have realised the 'Avatara-Rahasya-Jnanam' and 'Archavatara-Vailakshanyam' and have sought refuge with the Lord in this form alone.

The Lord is said to be in the form of an Antaryamin for purposes of meditation by yogins as residing in their hearts. The antaryamitva of the Lord is two-fold. As declared by the scriptures, he entered into all entities – sentient and non-sentient – having the jivatman as his body, and articulated differentiations of names and forms. There will

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not be the thinghood (padartatva) of a thing – sentient or non-sentient – without this inner principle. When he is immanent in every entity thus – as the inner-self – what is the significance in positing the Harda form of the Lord? Though the supreme being is 'Sarvantaryamin' he shows himself to the yogins that are engaged in meditation upon him as residing in their heart in his most auspicious form. This unique form of the Lord is known as the Harda aspect. The yogins meditate upon this auspicious divine nature of the Supreme Paramatman residing in their heart. Such yogins are engaged in Astanga Yoga and they are intent upon Hrdyaga or Manasa puja. They are qualified to meditate upon the Divyatma Swarupa of the 'Sarvantaryamin' as residing in their heart.

अष्टाङ्गयोगसिद्धानां हृद्यागनिरतात्मनाम् ।
योगिनां अधिकारस्स्यात् एकस्मिन् हृदयेशये ॥

In all these forms of incarnations, the Supreme Paramatman is never tainted with any kind of karma or results of the karma. His Divya-Mangala-Vigraha or Divine Auspicious form is formed of 'Shudha-Satva' Dravya or Aparakruta Dravya and so it is called 'Shudha-Srishti'.

These forms of the Lord will cause the attainment of the realisation of the auspicious qualities of the Lord to a प्रपत्तिनिष्ठ and strengthen his Maha-Vishvas or great faith in the Lord at the time of performance of Prapatti.

The functions of the Supreme Paramatman who is a home of all-knowledge, power, compassion, and a host of other auspicious qualities, are creation of the entire universe, protection and destruction of the same, granting of

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liberation to the deserving souls that pray for liberation and maintaining this universe by residing in all entities as their inmost-self. All these functions are undertaken by the Lord for the fulfilment of His own ananda or delight. They are all natural to Him and He is not functioning under any other compulsion. This is leela (or sport). Leela (or sport) is explained by masters as compassion for the souls that are bound from beginningless time to samsara. Desika describes in his Dayashataka that creation and destruction of the universe are the acts of compassion for erring humanity.

According to the infallible authorities of the scriptures, it is understood that the Lord is inseparably associated in all states with Goddess Mahalakshmi who is the Mother of this universe. The Purushasuktha declares that the Supreme Divinity is ever associated with Mahalakshmi. Sriman Narayana and Mahalakshmi together form the 'Paratatva' or the supreme reality. All acts of the Lord are performed along with Sri Mahalakshmi. Both of them are the sheshins for the hosts of sentient and non-sentient objects 'उभयाधिष्ठानं चैकं शेषित्वम्'

The great masters of the yore as well as the Alwars have realised this truth of the Supreme Divinity, being two-in-one and one-in-two.

Parasharabhattar and others have taught that the greatness of both is infinite and they have by mutual consent divided their functions. 'दण्डधरत्व' or punishing according to the sins committed, is the unique function of the Lord whereas 'purushakaratva' or appealing to the Lord on behalf of erring humanity is the unique function of Goddess Mahalakshmi.

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Mahalakshmi has never known 'Nigraha' or causing punishment. She is ever associated with the Lord and is full of compassion and so, argues in favour of those that surrender unto the Lord and gets protection of those from the Lord. So, anyone can confidently approach the Lord at any time praying for forgiveness for the wrongs done and seeking protection of the Lord. Mahalakshmi thus is the saviour of humanity in the form of mediatrix, who always lends her ears to the woes of humanity.

Desika points out that an awareness of the nature of the Supreme Principle, Sriman Narayana along with Goddess Mahalakshmi and the nature of the jivatman and the nature of the matter broadly as described here, is absolutely necessary for undertaking the spiritual disciplines for one's redemption. This much is absolutely necessary. All elaborations in innumerable works are only strengthening this knowledge firmly.

The three entities are explained thus. It may be thought of as one Supreme Reality, as qualified by all others, or it may be understood as the 'ruler' and the 'ruled', 'the Atman and the Antaman', 'the protector and the objects to be protected'. In whatever way it is explained, the knowledge of these will be helpful for working out one's upward evolution.

One should know that gaining the knowledge of the shastras is very difficult, as there are different views supporting and refuting the several doctrines. It may disturb the peace of one's mind. So, one should listen to that which is of supreme good viz. The Supreme Paramatman, and then practise the discipline of Prapati or Bhakti Yoga without going further again into the study of the shastras consisting

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of objections and confusions. The idea is that once when he knows the truth from the instruction of the Acharya, he should hurry to save himself without unnecessary further investigations.

शास्त्रज्ञानं बहुक्लेशं बुद्धेः चलनकारणम् ।

उपदेशात् हरिं बुध्वा विरमेत्सर्वकर्मसु।

The abandonment of all karmas mentioned here relates to the study of the shastra which is of the form of objections and answers based on logic. When he has known the ultimate truth from the Acharya, he need not further indulge in futile discussions that are comprising of various arguments for and against.

Desika concludes this chapter with one very meaningful verse, which is to be remembered always .

उपयुक्तेषु वैशद्यं त्रिवर्गनिरपेक्षता ।

करणत्रयसारूप्यं इति सौख्य रसायनम् ॥

There are three most important factors mentioned in this verse –

1. The truths regarding the essential knowledge to be gained and the various modes of actions to be undertaken, are mentioned here as 'Upayukthesu'. One should have clarity and steadfastness in them. This is 'Vaishadya'. This is gained from 'Manana' and 'Chintana' of the truths taught by the acharyas. When one reflects on these truths, all doubts and contradictions disappear.
2. The second factor is that one should get himself rid of desire for the attainment of benefits related to Dharma, Artha and Kama, after reflecting over their defects such

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as 'alpatva', 'asthiratva', 'duhka-mulatva', 'Duhka-mishratva' and others.

3. The third factor is Karanatraya-sarupyam. This means uniformity of the functions of the mind, speech and actions. 'Sarupyam' means 'Anurupatva' – of similar form – and non-difference between one another. And the attainment of these three is said to be 'soukhya-Rasayanam'. 'Soukhya' means 'mahanandam'. 'Rasayanam' is 'Sadhanam'. That means these are ever realised means of attainment of great delight.

4. Thus, in this chapter of Tatvatrayadhikara, Desika has expounded the essential nature of the three entities, the knowledge of which is absolutely necessary for undertaking any spiritual discipline clearly and concisely.

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CHAPTER - VI

Paradevata Paramarthyadhikara

After having taught the nature of the three entities viz. Matter, Jivatman and Paramatman, in a general way, Desika has established in this chapter i.e. Paradevata Paramarthyadhikara, the nature of the particular deity which is the supreme reality. According to the teaching of the scriptures, the Supreme Brahman described in the Upanishads is verily the same highest divinity of religion. The distinction made by Advaitins between Supreme Brahman and Iswara is not tenable because there are no valid 'pramanas' for positing such a difference. The argument of the advaitins that on account of the 'शुभोपाधि' or auspicious limiting adjuncts, the undifferentiated brahman is appearing as Ishwara, is not acceptable, as it is only 'kalpitha' or a fabric of imagination.

Ramanuja has declared in the introductory verse itself of his Sri Bhashyam, that the Supreme Brahman is Srinivasa or Sriman Narayana inseparably associated with Goddess Mahalakshmi. While defining the word 'Brahma' of the first sutra - 'अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा (वे.सू. - १-१-१) - Ramanuja says - 'ब्रह्मशब्देन च निरस्तनिखिलदोषः अनवधिकातिशय कल्याणगुणः पुरुषोत्तमो ऽभिधीयते। सर्वत्र बृहत्वगुणयोगेनहि ब्रह्मशब्दः । बृहत्त्वं च स्वरूपेण गुणैश्च यत्र अनवधिकातिशयं सः अस्य मुख्योऽर्थः । स च सर्वेश्वर एव'।

In the Brahma-sutras, while explaining the meanings of the sutra "लिङ्गभूयस्त्वात् तद्धिबलीयः" (वे.सू. - ३-३-४३) Ramanuja declares that the essential nature of the Supreme Brahman, to be meditated upon in all Brahmopasanas, is

determined as Sriman Narayana. It is the conclusion of the Sutrakara according to Ramanuja that the object of meditation that is described in the Upanishads differently as Akshara, Shiva, Shambu, Parabrahma, Paranjyoti, Paratatva, Paramatman, Sat, Akasha, Prana, Dahara, Jyoti and others, culminate in Sriman Narayana. The analogy of "Chagapasu Nyaya" is followed in determining the name of the particular deity that is to be meditated upon in all modes of Brahmopasana. The general names or terms culminate in Sriman Narayana. This fact of Sriman Narayana being the ultimate Reality to be meditated upon is expressly declared in the Mahanarayana Upanishad. The same truth is established in the Itihasas, Puranas, and Divya Prabhandhams. There are profuse authorities that establish the fact of Narayana being the supreme deity to be meditated upon for obtaining 'Moksha' or liberation.

In view of all these facts, Vedantha Desika has expounded the whole reality of the 'Paradevata Swarupa' in one section where he has drawn quotations from innumerable authorities to prove that the supreme deity is Sriman Narayana.

In an introductory verse to this chapter, Desika declares that well-meaning people who depend upon valid means of knowledge never give credence to the different doctrines of Ishvara, proposed by unwise people. Those different doctrines are of different forms such as

आत्मैक्यं देवतैक्यं त्रिकसमधिगता तुल्यतैक्यं त्रयाणां
अन्यत्रैश्वर्यमित्याद्यनिपुणफणितीः आद्रियन्ते न सन्तः ।
त्रय्यन्तैरेककण्ठैस्तदनुगुणमनु व्यासमुख्योक्तिभिश्च
श्रीमान्नारायणो नः पतिरखिलतनुः मुक्तिदो मुक्तभोग्यः ॥

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(A) Oneness of all the three entities – Atmaikyam ;

(B) Oneness of all deities with Paramatman – Devataikyam ;

(C) Equality among the trinity viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva ;

(D) Supreme deity higher than the trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva - 'त्रयाणां अन्यत्रैश्वर्यम्' ।

Yadavaprakasha's view was that there is only one Brahman (Dravyam) and that it has undergone change to assume the state of chetana and achetana. His view is that the Supreme Brahman alone has undergone change to become Ishvara, Jiva and Matter.

The second view – Devataikyam – posits oneness of the nature of the deity and there is no difference in nature of that divinity, though there is 'Sarira-Bheda' of deities such as Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, Agni, etc.

The next view is 'त्रिकसमधिगता तुल्यता' । This view posits that the three gods viz. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are equal in jnana, shakti and other qualities. All the three are equals.

The next view is 'त्रयाणां एक्यं' । Oneness of the three deities. The next view is that the supreme is higher than the trinity; that means 'त्रिमूर्त्युत्तीर्णता' ।

Desika suggests that there are certain views that try to establish the supremacy of Brahma or Rudra over the other two. All these views are unfounded because there are so many authorities that establish the supremacy of Sriman Narayana over all others.

Desika says that the Upanishads in one voice declare that Sriman Narayana is the परदेवता । He says त्रय्यन्तैः एककण्ठैः;

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because in the 'Purva-Bhaga", many other deities have been – in the context of karma – spoken as supreme. But in the Upanishads, it is universally declared that Vishnu - Narayana is the 'Paradevatha'. This kind of scriptural authority is not to be found in support of other doctrines of paradevatha.

These scriptural statements are corroborated by the teachings of Manu, Vyasa and others that are according to the Veda. This is suggested by the term 'तदनुगुण' and excludes the rajasic and the tamasic puranas that are opposed to the teachings of the Veda. The teachings of Valmiki, Parashara, Shuka and Shaunaka and other such masters also are implied in this statement. So, it is suggested here that certain statements that are contrary to this doctrine found in rajasic and tamasic puranas are not to be considered as authoritative. Desika declares the conclusion in the fourth line of this verse –

'श्रीमान् नारायणो नः पतिरखिलतनुः मुक्तिदो मुक्तभोग्यः'

In this statement, it is established that the supreme reality is inseparably associated with Goddess Sri. The paradevatha is both Sri and Narayana. Sri also is paradevatha. He is the Lord of everything other than himself. The word 'पतिः' signifies that he is 'Sheshin" and all entities other than Sriman Narayana are for subserving his purposes.

'Akhila-tanuh' signifies that Sriman Narayana is the 'antharyamin' in every other entity and when other doctrines such as Rudra, Indraprana, are ordained to be meditated upon, they signify the one, non-second antaryamin in all. Every other entity than the supreme Narayana, is his body; that means, it is supported, ruled over and used for his purposes.

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'Muktida' and 'Mukta-bhogyah' are very significant terms. The meaning of the term 'devatha' is a chetana that is to be worshipped and that grants the fruits of upasana, and this happens to be very true in respect of Sriman Narayana. He, the all-self, is to be worshipped and the 'phala' is also obtained from Him alone. Sriman Narayana is the Supreme Paradevatha that is experienced in the state of liberation. Thus, in the introductory verse, Desika has described the nature of the Supreme Reality.

At the very outset, a doubt arises whether it is necessary to determine the nature of the particular deity to be meditated upon. Would it not be enough if one understands that Ishvara is different and distinct from the Jiva ? To realise that the 'Prerita' or Ishvara is different and distinct from the Jivatman or bhokta as well as from matter, which is the object of enjoyment, would it not be enough for jivatman for gaining moksha ?

The answer to this question is that an aspirant should have a definite understanding about the nature of the paradevata or Supreme Deity, for attaining liberation from the contact of matter. His efforts for gaining the knowledge of Paramatman, should not be misdirected and wasted. Because 'Moksha' is possible of attainment only by one who is solely attached to the Supreme Deity – who is the means as well as the end. Only a paramaikantin can gain liberation immediately from the Supreme Deity. As it is established by valid authorities that there is real difference and distinction between the chetana and achetana, the view point of Yadavaprakasha and others that everything is Brahma-Dravya or Brahman in substance is incompatible. The difference between the jivas and Ishvara is established. Similarly, difference between one Jiva and another jiva is also

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established. The variations in respect of different jivas in their abilities, knowledge, experience of joy and sorrow and others, are established by the scriptures and as these differences are real, the doctrine that all gods such as Brahma, Rudra and others and Ishvara are non-different, is not correct. The gods such as Brahma, Rudra, Indra and others, are all labouring under the stress and strain of karma and they are all created by the one Supreme Deity, and so it cannot be held that they are all one with Ishvara. Except the one, non-second Supreme Lord, who is the creator of the universe, all others including the hierarchy of gods, beginning with the four-faced Brahma, are subordinated to Him and therefore, they cannot be one with Ishvara. They are all 'samsarins' holding different positions due to their different kinds of karma, good or bad. The scriptures declare in one voice that the Supreme Narayana is the cause of the origination, sustenance and destruction of the universe comprising of sentients and non-sentients.

Vedantha Desika quotes innumerable 'pramanas' from the scriptures, the Itihasa, Puranas, the Agamas and the Divyaprabandams, to establish the fact that Sriman Narayana is the one paradevata, who is the innerself in all other entities. The Taittiriya Upanishad, the Mahanarayana Upanishad, the Atharvashiropanishad, the Subalopanishad, expressly declare that Sriman Narayana is the Supreme Devata.

Some of the authorities that declare that Vishnu or Narayana as the Supreme Deity, may be mentioned as follows :–

"At the time of the dissolution of this universe, when the 'Mahat' tatva merged in the primordial matter, the one great universal-self, the Lord Sriman Narayana existed. 'आभूत संप्लवे प्राप्ते प्रलीने प्रकृतौ महान् । एकस्तिष्ठति विश्वात्मा स तु नारायणः प्रभुः'।

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"The primeval being was Sriman Narayana. From Him was born the four-faced Brahma, and from him was born Shiva."

'परो नारायणो देवः तस्माज्जातश्चतुर्मुखः । तस्मात् रुद्रोऽभवत्' ।

"For protecting all entities, you incorporated yourself, out of your will, in the midst of the trinity, as 'Vishnu' 'रक्षार्थं सर्वभूतानां विष्णुत्वं उपजग्मिवान्' ।

"Except that one 'Purusha', the primeval Vasudeva, there is no entity either moving or non-moving that is eternal."

'नित्यं हि नास्ति जगति भूतं स्थावर जङ्गमम् ।

ऋते तमेकं पुरुषं वासुदेवं सनातनम्' ।

"All gods worship Vasudeva, all gods bow down to Vasudeva". 'सर्वेदेवाः वासुदेवं यजन्ते सर्वे देवाः वासुदेवं नमन्ते' ।

"All gods including Brahma, Rudra and Indra, and all great sages are solely worshipping the Supreme God, Narayana".

''सब्रह्मकास्सरुद्राश्च सेन्द्रा देवा महर्षयः ।

अ सुरश्रेष्ठं देवं नारायणं हरिम्'' ।

It is decidedly declared in the scriptures that gods like Brahma, Rudra and others, are creations of the Supreme Lord Narayana and that Supreme Narayana, is the antaryamin of all those gods. It is pointed out that the gods that occupy positions of Brahma or Rudra, have attained those positions by means of their services to the Lord. They hold such positions on account of the grace of the one Supreme Lord.

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'ब्रह्माद्यास्सकला देवाः मनुष्याः पशवस्तथा ।
विष्णुमायामहावर्तमोहान्धतमसा वृता :' ॥

These gods are subordinated to the delusion of matter or prakruthi and are dominated by the interplay of the three 'gunas' viz. Satva, Rajas and Tamas and their knowledge is subjected to expansion and contraction and they serve the Lord, their antaryamin, in accordance with their understanding of the Supreme Lord.

They are also the Vibhuti or the inseparable attributes of the Supreme Lord who is the Master of the two vibhutis viz. the 'Leela' Vibhuti and 'Nitya' Vibhuti.

The following reasons establish that Sriman Narayana alone is the one Supreme Deity ruling over all other entities :–

1. Sriman Narayana is the 'Sarveswara' who is the creator of all others including Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Agni and others. These different deities are all in fact jivatmans occupying different positions on account of their meritorious karmas.

The "purusha' who was created by Sriman Narayana is called in this world as 'Brahma'. 'Ka' is the name of the chaturmukha Brahma. I am the master of all living beings called by the name 'Isa' Both of us were born of your body. So, you are called 'Keshava'. 'क इति ब्रह्मणो नाम ईशोऽहं सर्व देहिनाम् । आवां तवांगे सम्भूतौ तस्मात् केशवनामवान्' ।

2. All jivatmans – other than Paramatman - are dominated by karma (Karma-Vashya) and worshipping the Supreme Narayana, they have gained their respectable positions. They worshipped the Lord and the Lord being pleased

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with their worship, has granted them those celebrated positions of 'Brahma', 'Shiva' and 'Indra'.

All gods including Indra, Rudra and Brahma and all great sages worship the supreme deity Srihari otherwise known as 'Narayana'.

"I seek refuge with that great Lord whom even Brahma, Isvara and others do not understand, as he is, in spite of meditating upon him continuously".

युगकोटि सहस्राणि विष्णुमाराध्य पद्मभूः ।

पुनस्त्रैलोक्य धातृत्वं प्राप्तवानिति शुश्रुम' ॥

"The louts-born Brahma worshipped Vishnu for thousands of crores of yugas (yuga-koti-sahasrani) and once again obtained the position of that Chaturmuka-Brahma".

3. All gods are subjugated to the 'Maya' or Prakriti of the Lord. They are dominated by the trigunas. Their Dharma-Bhuta-Jnanam, is subjected to contraction and expansion. This is evident from the very many episodes of vedapahara, the sin of brahma-hatya and others. It was the Lord who came to their rescue at the times of their peril and so these gods cannot be considered as the 'Paradevata'.

4. All these other gods depend upon the Lord – their antaryamin – for gaining knowledge and for serving the Lord according to his commands.

"All these gods are not pure, because they are all born differently according to their respective karma".

आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तं जगदन्तर्व्यवस्थिताः ।

प्राणिनः कर्म जनित संसार वशवर्तिनः ॥

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" All living beings beginning with the Brahma, upto the smallest insect, are beings that are migrating in this world on account of their different karmas."

Beginning with that Brahma, all living beings are not pure and auspicious as they are all floundering in 'samsara' on account of karma. So, for a 'virakta' the Supreme Goal is Vasudeva alone."

'कर्मणां परिपाकत्वात् आविरिञ्चादमंगलम् ।

इतिमत्वा विरक्तस्य वासुदेवः परागतिः'।

5. The Supreme Narayana is the 'ashrayaneeya' or ultimate refuge to all other gods. But for that Supreme Narayana, there is no one who his "ashrayaneeya".

'ममाश्रयो न कश्चित्तु सर्वेषां आश्रयोऽह्यहम्' ।

6. Gods take refuge in Rudra. Rurda has Brahma as his refuge and that Brahma takes refuge in me and I have no one to take refuge. I am the final refuge." – says the Lord.

7. The Supreme Narayana is the Lord of both the Nitya-vibhuti and Leela-vibhuti. All others are the vibhutis of that Supreme Lord. The auspicious term 'Narayana' itself signifies that 'Supremacy' of Narayana.

8. All entities - sentient and non-sentient – are the bodies of the Lord, and the Supreme Lord – 'Sriman Narayana' – is the antaryamin in all entities. All others are subservient to the Supreme Narayana.

In 'Mantraraja-pada-stotra, the most eminent Rudra himself declares as follows :– 'दासभूताः स्वतः सर्वे आत्मानः परमात्मनः । अतोऽहमपि ते दासः इति मत्वा नमाम्यहम्'' ।

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"All atmans are the servants of that Paramatman by their nature. So, I am also your 'dasa'. Knowing thus, I seek refuge with you."

9. Those who are blessed with the glances of Supreme Narayana at the time of their birth, are said to gain the preponderance of 'satva' that leads them to become 'Mumukshus'. But the glances of others are leading to rajas and tamas that bind them to samsara.

10. It is declared clearly that gods like Brahma and Rudra, are not 'upasyas' for a person who desires moksha. Sriman Narayana is the "upasya" of even Brahma and Rudra, as well as all other aspirants of liberation.

संसारार्णवमग्नानां विषयाक्रान्तचेतसाम् ।

विष्णुपोतं विना नान्यत् किंचिदस्ति परायणम्।

"For people whose minds are over powered by the objects of the senses and who are drowning in the ocean of samsara, there is no refuge other than the boat of the form of Vishnu".

They can be worshipped by those who wish for earthly benefits and even in that case, the one, non-second, antaryamin is in fact the ultimate object of worship and the benefits granted by that Lord are given through those gods. Just like acharyas, other gods may be moksha-upakarakas or promoters of liberation. Those who crave for liberation, do not worship Brahma or Shiva or any other deity from whom one can get little benefit. "Srihari alone is to be meditated upon always by you who are established in satva". "That Supreme Lord is verily the 'upasya'. I am only a means to that meditation of the Supreme" (the statement of Rudra).

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'हरिरेकः सदा ध्येयः भवद्भिः सत्वसंस्थितैः ।
उपास्योऽयं सदा विप्राःउपायोऽस्मि हरेः स्मृतौ' ॥

11. It is learnt from the epics and the puranas that the Supreme Lord is 'sathya-sankalpa' and if he wills to punish anybody, no other person can save him. If he wills to protect some one, no one on earth can avert it.

12. There is a hierarchy of gods. These gods, their powers to grant phala, and the modes of their worship are all ordained by the Lord himself. Any one who seeks benefits from such gods, gets those benefits according to the will of the Supreme himself. But, those benefits are little and impermanent. If, on the other hand, one approaches the Lord for even earthly benefits, he gets those desires fulfilled and notwithstanding those little benefits, he will ultimately gain dispassion and attains the Lord himself gradually, by some spiritual discipline or other.

This wisdom of the nature of the Supreme Deity is very essential particularly for a 'Mumukshu'. One has the liberty to choose any god he pleases and pray for any benefit he desires. If it is in the powers of such gods, he can gain them. If he realises that he is worshipping the one Supreme Narayana, in worshipping the other gods, he will gain immense benefits and will be endowed with the necessary knowledge for liberating himself from samsara. But, it is decidedly declared that for gaining liberation one has to seek the 'Paradevata' and worship Him ardently.

This exposition is only placing the facts before aspirants and is not in any way belittling other gods.

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One may worship any god. It is better than becoming an atheist. The Lord says in the Gita, that he is going to strengthen the faith of a person who is devoted to some other god. That person may, after a long time, gain the real knowledge of the 'paradevata' at some time or other and save himself. But, it is wise to determine in the very beginning itself the nature of the 'paradevata'.

Desika points out that the three mantras or rahasyas, enshrine the truth of the 'paradevata'. In the Mulamantra, the letter 'Aa' in pranava and the third word, 'Narayana', point out to this Supreme Deity. The term 'Narayana' qualified by 'Sri' in the 'Dvaya-mantra' and the words 'Mam' and 'Aham' in the 'Charama-sloka', signify the reality of the 'Paradevata'. The Taittiriya Upanishad and the Mahanarayana glorify the 'Paradevata".

As pointed out already, the 'paradevata' consists of a duality viz. Goddess Sri and Narayana.

Sri Parashara in Vishnu Purana expounded this doctrine of 'paradevata'. Sri Yamuna expounds in Stotra Ratna, the Supreme Paradevata.

All other Acharyas have taught this Supreme Reality very clearly in their noble works and a person who studies all these texts realises that the Supreme Lord ever associated with Goddess Lakshmi, is the Supreme Deity or 'paradevata' in whom one has to take refuge.

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CHAPTER - VII

Mumukshuthvadhikara

It is rightly declared that three things are very rare to be obtained. Of these three, to be born as a human being is very rare. When one is endowed with the body, indriyas, mind and knowledge, a person will do well to obtain knowledge of the Reality and make an attempt to save himself from samsara. To be born in this world again and again, is never the goal of life. A wiseman should realise that the world nearest at hand is beset with dangers and defects and that it is not his goal to live here enmeshed in matter.

When one examines the real characteristics of this universe, he will understand that he is drowning in the ocean of samsara, being caught by the whirlpool of sorrows and sufferings. Being caught in this, he is subjected to birth, oldage, death, disease and others again and again without any cessation. The primordial matter which is in the subtle form at the time of pralaya, undergoes change and at the time of creation, forms the bodies of the migrating souls and will be causing great disasters in the form of clouding the knowledge of the jivatman and causing perverse knowledge of the Reality. A wiseman sees the defects and limitations of the earthly gains that are little, impermanent associated with sorrow at all levels, as Gita points out.

A person when he realises that life in this world being associated with matter, is heading to sorrow in all aspects, he gets displeased with this world at all levels. When a discriminating man understands this and the inescapable

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relationship between himself and the Supreme Lord and when he realises that he is qualified fully for attaining the supreme abode of the Lord which is free from sorrows and is of the form of supreme bliss which is verily his true nature, he yearns to get free from the clutches of samsara.

Then, he gains 'mumukshutva' which is the second rare state a Jivatman gains. It is very rare to gain mumukshutva. Though a person is endowed with right knowledge, though he is following right action, though he is a home of all virtues like kshama, dama and others, he may not have 'mumukshutva' for which God's grace is necessary.

When a person is blessed with 'manushyatva' and 'mumukshutva' he must take refuge with a great, compassionate master, for guiding him to proceed on the way of spiritual realisation. This is Mahapurusha Samashraya.

These three things lead one to gain spiritual perfection.

It is really to a fortunate person that these three happen. It will not happen on its own account. A person has to discriminate between right values and wrong ideals and gain true knowledge from the shastras through accredited masters and develop mumukshutva in an orderly manner. Who is a mumukshu ? How should an aspirant after moksha, behave in this world ? What should he necessarily know ? What should he aspire for? These have been discussed in great detail in this section – Mumukshutvadhikara. As a pre-requisite for gaining the mumukshutva, Desika has described in the earlier section that (1) one should decide the utmost essence or the sarathama knowledge; (2) the fundamental relationship of the jivatma with paramatman, as shesha and sheshi; (3) one should have a perfect knowledge of the five truths

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(arthapanchaka); (4) the essential nature of the three realities viz. the jivatman, matter and Ishvara as well as their mutual relationship and the truth of the nature of the Supreme Deity, who is to be worshipped and sought as a refuge. With these preliminary understandings, an aspirant will be able to know the nature of matter and its wonderful way of binding the souls down to samsara, the nature of the jivatman – who is a jnanananda swarupa and who is subservient to the one Supreme Lord and his true destiny of attaining the eternal service of the Supreme Divinity. It is necessary that he should have a decisive knowledge of the nature of the Supreme Deity whom he has to worship and gain, through supreme devotion and self-surrender. This will enable him to concentrate on the means of attainment of that Supreme Deity. Such an aspirant would be wholly displeased with the nearest world at hand and he would not bear to be imprisoned any more in the mortal body. He would yearn to free himself from the bondage of matter.

Desika outlines in this chapter – Mumukshutvadhikara – very clearly how one should develop dispassion towards the world and how one should have an earnest desire to attain the Supreme Paramatman. In the introductory verse, Desika exhorts humanity to develop a keen desire to free oneself from the clutches of matter.

कालावर्तान् प्रकृतिविकृतीः कामभोगेषु दोषान्
ज्वालागर्तप्रतिम दुरितोदर्क दुःखानुभूतिम् ।
याथातथ्यं स्वपरनियतं यच्च दिव्यं पदंतत्
काराकल्पं वपुरपिविदन् कस्तितिक्षेतबन्धम् ।

When one realises the following firmly that

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I Everything in this world is subjected to the limitation of time. Destruction is the destiny of all things in this world. They are all swept away by the huge flood of time causing birth, death, oldage etc. again and again. Even people who live very long are destined to die one day.

II The subtle matter undergoes change incessantly and evolves in the form of indriyas, objects and other things resulting in the shielding of Reality.

III The pleasure of this world as well as the other world are full of defects. They are little, impermanent, they are obtained through dukha or pain, they are mixed with sorrow, they lead to sorrow, are the causes of perverse knowledge and they are opposed to the experience of the nature of the bliss of the atman.

IV They are leading to the experience of the great suffering of sorrow in 'naraka' which is similar to the terrible cauldron of blazing fire, though they appear pleasant at the present time.

V The true nature of his own self and Paramatman and the inescapable relationship of shesha-sheshi bhava.

VI That immaterial abode, the abode of the Supreme Paramatman which he is going to attain and which is bereft of any defect and which is agreeable to the experience of the Divine.

VII The body which he is now having is just like a prison obstructing him from the true experience of himself and the Paramatman by limiting his consciousness.

Such an aspirant who has gained this kind of knowledge would never bear even for a moment to be bound like that by the body.

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The scriptures that teach the real nature of the Individual Self, matter and Paramatman, exhort man to act without delay in such a way that he will not be born again.

आब्रह्मभुवनादेते दोषास्सन्ति महामुने ।
अत एव हि नेच्छन्ति स्वर्गप्राप्तिं मनीषिणः ॥

"Beginning from the world of Brahma, all these worlds are full of defects. It is on account of this reason that the wise do not desire to gain heaven or svarga."

Desika has described in detail the characteristics of persons who are competent to become aspirants after liberation, as follows : –

1. One should know from the spiritual texts that the essential nature of the atman is self-luminosity and consciousness. The atman is endowed with knowership, doership, enjoyership and the nature of being associated with a body. His atman is 'anu' or atomic in nature, eternal, without any parts, and he is bereft of any kind of expansion or diminution, not possible of being cut or burnt or dried up, whereas the body is different and distinct from his self. He should have a general understanding that he is liable to be born with different bodies. Being endowed with this knowledge, he will be fit to gain the ultimate object of life.

2. He must be fully aware of the fact that he is different and distinct from Isvara on account of the fact of his utter dependence upon the Lord. One who realises that he is supported, ruled over by the Lord and used for the purposes of Lord himself, will realise that one should yearn for the attainment of the glory of divine service.

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The aspirant should be well aware of his alpa-shaktitva and ajnana and having an inauspicious body.

3. He must get rid of the five kinds of 'ahankara' as shown below after reflecting upon the true nature reflected in the third letter of the first word of the Mulamantra. :– ज्ञानत्वानुसन्धान in मकार ।

a. The ahankara that ensues on account of his relation with the body and those that are related to his body such as children and others.

b. The illusion that he has mastery over his own self and the quality of that self.

c. He should get rid of the illusion that he is shesha or subservient to others.

d. He should also get rid of the illusion that he is the cause of his protection independent of others i.e. having 'nirapeksha-swantra' in his own 'rakshana-vyapara'.

e. He must free himself from the illusion of the form of his independent doership and independent enjoyership i.e. Swadhina Kartrutva and Swadhina Bhoktrutva. Likewise, he must get rid of the illusion of the nature of Swartha Kartrutva and Swartha Bhoktrutva, i.e. doership and enjoyership for one's own benefit.

4. Such a person will realise that the experience of the objects of this world as well of the other world consisting of non-sentient things are little (alpa), impermanent (asthira), obtained through pain and suffering (duhka-mulatva), it is mixed with sorrow (duhka-mishra), resulting in sorrow (duhka-udarka), the cause of perverse

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beliefs (viparita-abhimana-mula) and opposed to the experience of the natural bliss (swabhavika-ananda-virudha).

5. Similarly, he has to realise that the experience of the pure atman (unconnected with matter) is also having its own defects as it is deprived of the infinite bliss of divine communion.

6. When a person reflects upon these factors, mentioned above, he will come to a definite decision that he should turn away from all activities that lead to re-birth in this universe, and he renounces interest in all these things and will be engaging himself in Nivritti-Dharma. Such a person is an adhikarin or aspirant of moksha.

This has been expounded by savants differently for exhorting man to have a breach with the nearest world at hand and to have a positive and genuine turn towards gaining liberation. The Alwar says like this – "they are of very little essence; having experienced them, I have given up all of them" (t.m. 3-2-6) "having experienced the objects of the five senses, I have realised that the pleasure from the objects is very little." (t.m. 4-6-10)

The Gita says – 'the fruit of all those ignorant people becomes little and they end at a particular time' (Gita 7-23). 'Having come upon this world which is full of sorrow and impermanence, worship me alone to get rid of it'. (Gita 9-33). 'Having heard that the most mighty, the most valiant and the most wealthy have all been swept away by the floods of time, and nothing of them, other than their names, being left behind, a wise person will not become attached to a wife or a house or a land or money'. "Even in heaven, one will not have

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happiness, as he is ever afraid of a fall due to exhaustion of that punya." "These defects are found in respect of all these worlds beginning with the world of Brahma. That is why wise people do not desire the attainment of swarga." "The Supreme Abode of Vishnu, is above the abode of the four-faced-Brahma. It is pure, eternal and luminous and known as 'Brahman' itself." "The unwise that are devoted to the objects of the world, never reach that place." "All these abodes are verily hells, when compared with the Supreme Abode of Paramatman."

These authorities make it clear that all things other than the attainment and experience of Paramatman are subjected to defects. So, a discriminating person should turn away from all activities leading to worldly attainments and seek whole-heartedly that means by which he attains immortality.

Such a person who has developed an aspiration for gaining liberation from samsara, should adopt the appropriate means for gaining moksha. Knowledge should be translated into appropriate action. This kind of anushthana or practice, will be in accordance with one's refinement of mind that is gained by the teaching of all great preceptors. Sadupadesha is absolutely essential for leading one to the performance of the appropriate spiritual discipline for attainment of the highest object of life. One should engage himself in the Parama-Purusha-Anushthana, without any delay according to his ability and the instruction of the teachers. Desika quotes here a verse which is very meaningful. –

वयसः कर्मणोऽर्थस्य श्रुतस्याभिजनस्य च ।
वेषवाग्वृत्तिसारूप्यं आचरन् विचरेदिह ॥

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"A person should behave in this world having unison with his attire, speech and action according to his age, profession, wealth, knowledge and birth". This implies that a person who has gained rare knowledge from the preceptors should act accordingly.

In the ultimate analysis, it may be said that it is only through Lord's grace that one will be born as a human being, will get a suitable teacher through whom he gains spiritual wisdom and becomes a mumukshu and adopts the necessary means for attainment of liberation.

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CHAPTER - VIII

Adhikari Vibhagadhikara

After describing the essential requirements for becoming a genuine seeker of moksha or liberation, Desika has described in this section, that there are two kinds of aspirants after moksha. Adhikarin means one who is competent and fit for undertaking spiritual discipline for gaining moksha. These aspirants are of two kinds. Both these kinds of aspirants are engaged in Nivritti Dharma and they are (1) those who adopt self surrender directly for attainment of moksha and (2) those that surrender unto the Lord for gaining liberation through Bhakti Yoga or Upasana. One is adopting prapatti or self-surrender as a direct means and the other one will be performing surrender as an accessory to upasana or Bhakti Yoga. Both these are 'prapannas' as well as 'Bhaktas.'

The idea is that prapatti which is an independent means to moksha is necessarily having the aspect of Bhakti or Supreme Love for God. Without Bhakti, there cannot be prapatti. Similarly, Bhakti Yoga which is of the form of continuous remembrance of the form, qualities and glory of the Lord, with love, becomes possible only through prapatti. Bhakti Yoga is called 'Sadhana' Bhakti and Prapatti is called 'Phala' 'Bhakti' or "Sadhya" Bhakti. So, it is to be known that one is not exclusive of the other. Both these types of aspirants are called as 'Bhaktas' or Prapannas'.

स्वतन्त्रांगप्रपत्तिभ्यां प्रपन्नावत्र तावुभौ ।
फलसाधन भक्तिभ्यां भक्तावपि च दर्शितौ ।

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In this treatise, Desika is expounding the essentials of prapatti or self-surrender as a direct means at the feet of the Lord for attainment of moksha and therefore, works out the particulars to be noted as related to 'Prapatti' mainly.

Prapatti is of three forms i.e. Ukthinishta or devoted to the essential form of uttering the words of surrender; Acharya-nishta or taking refuge with the preceptor and entrusting the responsibility of surrendering unto the Lord to be actuated through the Acharya or preceptor; the third form is 'Swanishta' or being steadfast in surrendering unto the Lord by himself as one will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and the procedure of surrender. Now, we will briefly note the important characteristics of each one of these forms.

'Ukthinishta' – An aspirant who has clear conviction that there is no saviour for him other than the Supreme Lord and who has realised his utter helplessness, but is not having a clear notion of the accessories of prapatti such as aanukulya-sankalpa and others, seeks the mediation of an Acharya, and utters the words of surrender unto the Lord, as the Lord clearly knows his prayer, as taught by his preceptor.

Here, there is an effort on the part of the aspirant in repeating the words of surrender with full faith in the saving grace of the Lord, as taught by the compassionate preceptor. It is similar to the fact of some subordinate young prince surrendering unto an emperor with the words taught by his nurses. Though they may not understand the meanings of these words, the Lord understands their desire and grants them whatever is prayed for. Desika gives the example of brahmacharins getting भिक्षा from virtuous people by uttering 'भवति भिक्षां देहि' even if they did not know the meaning of

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that sentence. As pointed out by Ramanuja in 'Sharanagati-Gadya', 'येन केनापि प्रकारेण द्वयवक्ता त्वम्।' The Lord will compassionately become pleased with such statements of surrender and grants them whatever is desired. This is certainly yielding the result, as there is genuine appeal to the Lord for mercy and for grant of liberation. When one surrenders in whatever manner it may be, the Lord is sure to protect him.

Acharya-Nishta – A person who has definite understanding that he cannot save himself and that his protection is possible only through the grace of the Lord, but has not the understanding of the way of surrendering unto the Lord, takes refuge with full faith in his preceptor and begs of him to entrust the Lord with the burden of protecting him and granting him moksha. In other words, he gives the power of attorney to his Acharya, and will have full faith in his Acharya. The Acharya on the other hand, entrusts the Lord with the burden of protection of that soul on behalf of that soul. Here, the Acharya secures liberation for that soul from the Lord and that person has only to entrust the responsibility of getting his liberation, with Acharya with full faith.

Any one of these ways of surrender is sure to secure the emancipation of the atman. When one takes refuge with the Acharya, his protection is included in the surrender of the Acharya unto the Lord inclusive of those that belong to him. A famous statement is quoted by Desika here सिद्धिर्भवति वा नेति संशयोऽच्युत सेविनाम् । न संशयोत्र तंद्भक्त परिचर्यारतात्मनाम्॥

"There is a doubt whether a person who is worshipping the Lord, gains fulfilment or not; but, there is no doubt

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about a person who is devoted to the loving service or a devotee of that Lord." It may be asked how it could be believed that one would attain spiritual perfection by seeking an Acharya alone, without one's own effort for moksha ? For this question, the statement of Mudaliyandan, gives a suitable answer. When one has an association with an Acharya, he is sure to be saved along with that Acharya, just as a lion that leaps from one mount to another one, carries along with it the worms or other beings taking refuge in its body in the same way, when Sri Bhashyakarar crosses over samsara, we will also cross over samsara, if we are closely devoted to Bhashyakarar. This is an example to impress on the point that the relationship with the Acharya is of utmost importance and the prime cause of gaining salvation. Desika has given an example in 'Nyasa-Tilaka' where he extols the role of an Acharya, and significance of an 'Acharya Nishta'.

अन्धोऽनन्धग्रहण वशगो याति रंगेश यद्वत्
पङ्गुर्नौकाकुहरनिहितो नीयते नाविकेन
भुङ्क्ते भोगानविदितनृपः सेवकस्यार्भकादिः
त्वत्संप्राप्तौ प्रभवति तथा देशिको मे दयालुः ॥

"As a blind person, who is under the care of a non-blind person, moves safely; similarly when a lame person is taken from place to place, being carried in a boat by a boatman; even as the children of a servant serving a king enjoy the good things even though they are not acquainted with the king, in the same way, the compassionate Acharya will become capable of causing the attainment of thyself O 'Ranganatha.'

This statement of Desika, makes clear the efficacy of

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Acharya-Nishta. Here, the desire to attain the Lord is strong; but, the Acharya alone is capable of making the desire fulfilled. The first simile is an illustration to point out that he is not having necessary knowledge. The second illustration is an example to point out that he has no ability or shakti and the third example is to point out that there is absence of knowledge and ability.

The first example illustrates the 'Ukti-nishta'; the second example is illustrating 'Acharya-nishta', who are saved by the preceptor on his own request and the third one is pointing out those people who are the objects of compassion to the preceptor even when an aspirant has not made a formal prayer.

It is an established fact that the Lord does not grant moksha to one, unless one surrenders unto the Lord in some way or other, whether the act of surrendering is performed by oneself or it is performed by some other person on behalf of one. Unless one surrenders unto the Lord, seeking protection with a prayer, one will not be saved. Suppose a person has respect and reverance towards a bhagavatha or even when one lives in a holy place, it may be asked whether the Lord would not save him. "Is it not said that taking refuge with a bhagavatha would lead to moksha ?". There is a statement as follows :-

पशुः मनुष्यः पक्षी वा ये च वैष्णवसंश्रयाः ।
तेनैव ते प्रयास्यन्ति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥

One who seeks the grace of a vaishnava, whether he is a man or a bird or an animal, he will attain the abode of Vishnu by that vaishnava-samashraya alone.

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"The people who live in the domain of king, are to be protected by the king, whether they live in the city or in the forest." The sages of Dandaka forest said so to Sri Rama. Nammalwar says that Sri Rama took along with him all the moving and non-moving entities to santanika loka. From these, does it not become clear that 'bhagavatabhimana' and 'bhagavadvishayavasa' would lead to the attainment of the Supreme Paramatman? Desika points out that these viz. 'Bhagavatabhimana' and 'Bhagavadvishayavasa' will be helpful to one in causing an urgency in attaining Brahman. It is to be noted that this kind of 'Bhagavatabhimana' and others will influence one, either to surrender directly unto the Lord or through the preceptor, either earlier or later. This kind of relationship with prapatti or bhakti will be caused by such causes viz. भागवताभिमान and भगवद्विषय

The decided opinion of the masters is that moksha is possible only by prapatti. Prapatti as already pointed out, is Sadvaraka or Advaraka.

If one adopts the means of upasana, that meditation becomes more and more intense in course of time. For one who has surrendered for moksha itself, it will cause an urgency in attainment of godhead by promoting loving service to the Lord so long as he is stationed here. This is how 'Bhagavathabhimana' and 'Bhagavadvishayavasa' will be helpful for the sadhaka.

The means of Bhaktiyoga or Upasana and the means of surrender, are differently contributing to the attainment of the Supreme Goal. The Upasaka is capable of practising Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and Bhaktiyoga, and so is not an "akinchana" or utterly helpless person. He performs surrender for the completion of his upasana. Such an

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aspirant will attain the moksha, the fruit of upasana, at the end of the exhaustion of the prarabdha karma, duly having 'Antima Pratyaya' or final vivid perception of the Lord. He has to wait for the exhaustion by experience of the prarabdha karma and he would bear that delay. This kind of upasana is possible for only the higher three castes and he has to practise it continuously till the fruit is gained.

A person who practises surrender directly for moksha, has to perform surrender only once. All beings are qualified for this kind of self-surrender. This surrender is capable of averting all sins. It is the means of attaining all objects of desire. It is easy to perform, because it does not involve the performance of elaborate accessories of upasana such as Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and Astangayoga and others. The final vision or 'Antima Pratyaya' will be granted by the Lord himself at the right moment of his own accord. This prapatti is sure to result without delay and there are no obstructions for it. It is just like the Brahmastra and does not require any other sub-means. A person who adopts this means directly or through an Acharya, will be having that satisfaction of experiencing the Lord from the very moment of surrender. Such a 'prapanna' would attain liberation at the fall of his body in that life. He will be enjoying the bliss of communion with the Lord in this world itself in the form of Archavatara.

Prapatti is a means for attainment of all kinds of fruits worldly and other worldly, just as Bhaktiyoga. The sages of yore have declared that an aspirant can gain any object of his desire through prapatti. It is declared in the verse given below:

तावदार्तिः तथा वाञ्छा तावन्मोहः तथा सुखम् ।
यावन्नयति शरणं त्वामश्रेषाघनाशनम् ॥

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In this verse, it is stated that an 'Artha', 'Artharthi', 'Kaivalyarthi' and 'Moksharthi' will not be able to gain their object of desire, until they surrender unto the Lord. 'आर्तिः' signifies an 'Artha' who is sorrowing for having not gained the lost wealth. 'Vancha' signifies the desire to gain new wealth. 'Moha' implies the illusion of the body being considered as atman, when that is destroyed, he will realise his pure self. 'असुखं' signifies the misery of the form of not experiencing the Lord. That kind of misery will end when surrendering unto the Lord.

It is declared in the shastras that a 'Prapanna' is more celebrated than a 'Karmayogin' or a 'Jnanayogin' or a 'Bhaktiyogin' by virtue of the fact that he has entrusted the burden of his protection unto the Lord Himself with supreme faith and remains fearless and careless.

सत्कर्मनिरताः शुद्धाः सांख्ययोगविदस्तथा ।
नार्हन्ति शरणस्थस्य कलां कोटितमीमपि ।

Those who are engaged in Karmayoga or Jnanayoga or Bhaktiyoga, are not worthy of a croreth part of the celebrity of a prapanna. 'Satkarmaniratah' signifies Karmayogin; 'Sankhya' signifies Jnanayogin and 'Yogavidah' points out Bhaktiyogin. The 'Sharanasta' is the Prapanna. The greatness of the "Prapanna" is pointed out here and not a censure of the other yogins. The analogy of 'Nahininda Nyaya' is to be understood here. The other three yogins are not decried, but prapatti is glorified and this kind of discrimination is caused by the punya that is done by such aspirants.

So long as they are embodied in this world, there may be difference in the 'kainkarya' they offer to the Lord. For

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this, the difference in their desire, is the cause. This difference in desire is due to their prarabdha sukrutha. But, there is no difference in the experience of bliss when one reaches the Supreme Abode at the end or the fall of the final body. All the released have the same amount of blissful experience. Another significant factor is that, all these prapannas or bhaktas are subordinated to the Lord in the same way. The substance of this chapter is summarised in one Sanskrit verse at the end of the chapter :–

प्रपन्नादन्येषां न दिशति मुकुन्दो निजपदं
प्रपन्नश्च द्वेधा सुचरित परीपाकभिदया ।
विलम्बेन प्राप्तिः भजनसुखमेकस्य विपुलं ।
परस्याशु प्राप्तिः परिमितरसा जीवितदशा ॥

The Lord does not accord His abode to those who are other than prapannas. The prapannas are (on account of the difference in their 'Sucharita' or Punya) - two-fold viz. one who is utterly helpless 'Akinchana' and the other who can perform the means of 'Sadhana' ie. 'Sakinchana'. For one who is a Bhaktiyogi or a 'Sadvaraka-Prapanna', there is delay in attainment of the godhead but there is plenty of the bliss of loving service to the Lord here. For the other i.e. 'Advaraka-Prapanna', or 'Sadhya-Bhakta', the attainment of the God will be without delay, but here the bliss of divine experience will be limited, as it is limited to that body. Thus, both of them attain the Lord at different periods according to their sadhana.

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CHAPTER - IX

Upayavibhagadhikara

After describing the different kinds of aspirants after liberation, that undertake the means of attainment of the Lord in general, in this chapter, the two significant means of attainment of paramatman are expounded. The two means are 'Bhakti' and 'Prapatti'. "I can be attained through supreme devotion to me or surrender unto me; I cannot be attained by any other means" says the Lord. In this section, the main features of these two moksha-upayas are outlined. It is also pointed out here that Karmayoga and Jnanayoga are not independent means of attainment of godhead. They are accessories to Bhaktiyoga. That Bhaktiyoga can be possible of commencement and completion only through self-surrender unto the Lord. Even for becoming an upasaka or a prapanna, the grace of the Lord is absolutely necessary. In the ultimate analysis, the Supreme Lord Himself is the means to His attainment. All these points are spelt in the introductory verse of this section.

उपायः स्वप्राप्तेः उपनिषदधीतस्स भगवान्
प्रसत्त्यै तस्योक्ते प्रपदन निदिध्यासन सृती ।
तदारोहः पुंसस्सुकृत परिपाकेन महता
निदानं तत्रापि स्वयमखिलनिर्माण निपुणः ॥

The meaning of this verse is given below:–

"That Supreme Lord is declared by the Upanishads as the sole means of his attainment. Self-surrender and intense

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meditation are meant for awakening his mercy and gaining his grace. An aspirant is blessed to adopt either of these two means on account of immense merit or punya. Even when there is such great merit on the part of the aspirant, it is only on account of the Supreme Lord, who is the root-cause of adopting such a means."

The Upanishads expound that He is the granter of immortality.

'अमृतस्यैष सेतुः' 'यः आत्मदा', 'यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः'

These statements establish that the Lord alone is the ultimate means for His attainment. It may be asked then, where is the need for Bhakti or Prapatti? If it is admitted that these also are means of attainment, then the vedic declaration that He alone is the means of attainment becomes contradictory. So, it is declared here that these means are necessary for getting rid of His displeasure, which is an obstacle to his attainment. The Lord is displeased and has willed to punish those who have transgressed the divine command from beginningless time. For gaining his mercy, and for averting His anger, this kind of intense devotion with love or surrender with supreme faith is helpful. From this the fact of the Lord alone being the 'upaya' is established.

'सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि', 'मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात् तरिष्यसि', 'क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे' ।

These scriptural statements affirm that Bhakti and Prapatti are meant for 'Nigraha-rupa Kalushya Nivriti' and in the absence of these, the Lord will not shower his grace. It is also pointed out here, that one gains this kind of

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knowledge on account of the grace of that Supreme Paramatman himself, who becomes pleased with some good act done knowingly or unknowingly by a person. It is on account of the grace of the Lord that one will be blessed with an Acharya at the proper time, who enlightens him and leads to the adoption of some means of liberation. So, the fact of the Lord alone being the means of His attainment, is established.

In this section, the two main means of attainment of God, viz. Bhakti and Prapatti are described. The difference between 'Upaya' and 'Upeya' is first mentioned. The 'Upaya' is defined as a kind of Jnana Vikasa Vishesha, that means extension of a particular kind of knowledge. The 'Upeya' or the object of attainment, is also defined as a kind of extension of knowledge. The particular extension of knowledge which happens to be 'Upaya' or means is –

1. Karana Sapeksha or dependent upon the functions of the indriyas;
2. Shastra vihita or ordained by the scriptures and related to the Supreme Brahman as its object, as necessarily qualified by the five (Swarupa Nirupaka Dharma) characteristics such as Satyatva, Jnanatva, Anantatva, Amalatva and Anandatva, and as qualified by the qualities that are to be particularly meditated upon in the several types of upasanas, and as qualified by an auspicious divine form. This is related necessarily to Brahman.

The particular extension of knowledge as related to the 'Upeya' or the object of attainment is (1) Karana-Nirapekshah – not depending upon the functioning of the indriyas; (2) Swabhavaprapta or attaining according to its nature and

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(3) paripurna Brahman – being the object characterised by all auspicious qualities and vibhutis.

The 'Upaya' Jnana Vikasa and 'Upeya' Jnana Vikasa are both having Brahman as their object. The meditation upon the qualities that are prescribed in each type of meditation, qualify the 'upaya' jnana. One has to meditate upon Brahman as prescribed in the respective mode of upasana. This is 'Karana-Sapeksha' or requiring the function of indriyas and it should be as prescribed in the shastra. This kind of extension of knowledge is the upaya jnana.

The upeya jnana is also related to Supreme Brahman and for this kind of extension of knowledge, there is no need of the body as it is related to the liberated one, the mukta. Though the mukta has an 'Aprakrita' sharira, there is no need for the body for extension of knowledge. It is 'swabhava-prapta' as obstruction will have been cleared, and it is naturally attained. It is related to 'Paripurna Brahman' as qualified by all auspicious qualities, and vibhutis. When a person meditates on Brahman, he meditates upon certain qualities that are required to be meditated upon, in that type of meditation. He is not meditating upon all auspicious qualities; but, when he attains Brahman, he does not experience Brahman as conditioned by only those qualities on which he meditated. Instead, he experiences Brahman with all his perfections.

Vedantha Desika has expounded here that the upaya or the means of attainment of Brahman is a particular kind of extension of knowledge. Upaya or means of attainment, is also a kind of knowledge which assumes the form of vivid perception of the object of attainment 'Darshana-Samanakaratapanna-jnanam' is the upaya. Here the objectof

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meditation is Brahman alone. That is the knowledge related to Brahman, as prescribed in the several ways of upasana. For example, in 'Dahara-vidya', the upasaka meditates upon dahara or Brahman along with the eight auspicious qualities that are prescribed in that mode of upasana. In addition to this, he has to meditate upon the five swarupa-nirupaka-dharmas or the characteristics that determine the essential nature of Brahman, such as satyatva, jnanatva, anantatva, anandatva and amalatva. This kind of particular extension of knowledge as related to Brahman the object of meditation, is the upaya. This depends upon the function of the indriyas of the upasaka, and as it is ordained in the shastras thus. Even here, one has to meditate upon Brahman, as characterised by a divine auspicious form. Thus, the upaya, is a kind of extension of knowledge.

The Upeya Jnana is also having the Supreme Brahman itself as its object, that relates to the Paripurna Brahma Vishaya. This extension of knowledge is not karana-sapeksha. It does not depend upon the activity of the indriyas of the upasaka. It is self-established. It is related to Brahman as qualified by all perfections. This is the 'Bhogya' or the object of experience that is gained by the aspirant through his meditation. So, this is the 'Phala' or the 'Prapati' of attainment. This is upeya on account of it being the object of attainment. The upayajnanam is the Paramatman himself as He is the 'Phalaprada' or the granter of the result. The difference between these two aspects of knowledge related to Brahman is this – (1) one is phalaprada i.e. related to Brahman who is the bestower of the result of upasana and (2) the other one is bhogya or the object of experience.

A doubt may arise here. According to the Tatkratu-

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Nyaya, which ordains that one attains the results as he meditates here, should an aspirant not attain only Brahman as qualified by the particular qualities, which alone the sadhaka meditates upon in his upasana here. To illustrate, should not a Dahara-Upasaka attain Brahman as qualified by eight qualities alone ? How can it be said that he attains Paripurna Brahman. This doubt is cleared as follows :–

The Tatkratu-Nyaya here points out that he will necessarily attain Brahman as qualified by those qualities which he meditated upon in his Upasana; but, it does not exclude other auspicious qualities with which Brahman is necessarily qualified. So, it is concluded here that though an aspirant meditates upon Brahman as qualified by the prescribed qualities in the respective upasanas, he will attain Brahman as qualified by all auspicious qualities.

उपासितगुणादेर्या प्राप्नावप्यबहिष्क्रिया ।

सा तत्क्रतु नयग्राह्या नाकारान्तरवर्जनम् ॥

The blissful experience of Brahman in the state of liberation, overflows in the form of eternal divine service to the Lord, and so it is declared that Nitya Kainkarya or eternal divine service to the Lord, is the object of attainment.

As the Supreme Lord is the object of knowledge of the form of both the means and the goal, he is declared as the means and fruit – upaya and upeya. He is upaya, as he is Phalaprada. He is upeya, as he is Bhogya. The fact of Brahman being the upaya of an upasaka, is explained thus. But, how is he the upaya in the case of prapanna who is performing self-surrender directly for moksha ? In the case of such a prapanna, the Paramatman is placed as a substitute

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to Bhaktiyoga, and he is prayed to get the fruit on behalf of the aspirant. Not only this, even for a Bhakti Yogin, even from the very beginning of his sadhana – commencing with karmayoga and others and upto the fulfilment of the completion of the sadhana, Paramatman, who is pleased with his surrender, will see that all those obstructions are cleared and causing the enhancement of satva, he will see that the means of upasana will become fruitful.

Desika explains further the essential nature of different spiritual disciplines such as Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and others. When a person realises his self through the discipline or Karmayoga and Jnanayoga, he becomes qualified for Bhaktiyoga. Karmayoga is the performance of a particular karma that is possible for him, without having the attachment of kartrutva and phala and sambandha along with the performance of the ordained duties i.e. Nitya, Naimittika and Kamya, with the essential knowledge of the jivatman and paramatman gained from the shastras. मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्यस्य अध्यात्मचेतसा । निराशीः निर्ममो भूत्वा ॥ That particular chosen karma should be performed without any desire in the fruit thereof and as worship of the Lord regularly till it becomes fruitful. It is necessary that one should surrender unto the Lord for success in Karmayoga. As Karmayoga involves in itself the essential knowledge of the jivatman, it may directly lead to the experience of the jivatman, or it may lead to that realisation of the jivatman through Jnanayoga.

Jnanayoga is the incessant remembrance of the essential nature of the jivatman who is different and distinct from the matter and who is the body of Par matman by virtue of his being supported, ruled over and used for His own purposes

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invariably. This can be done only when one has gained victory over the mind through karmayoga. Even while performing Jnanayoga, one should pray and surrender unto the Lord 'मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तः युक्त आसीत मत्परः'. When an aspirant realises the true nature of his atman through yoga gained through Karmayoga and Jnanayoga, he becomes qualified for Bhaktiyoga. If he is not tempted by the happiness or the joy of the experience of the mere atman (Kevala Atmanubhava Sukham) which discards the thirst for the experience of the objects of the world, he will yearn for the attainment of paramatman. This self experience and realisation of the self is a necessary accessory to Bhaktiyoga, as a transparent case is helpful to see the gem inside. Likewise, the vivid vision of the jivatman, who happens to be the body of Paramatman, is very helpful to become a Bhaktiyogin. When the aspirant realises that his essential nature is subservient to the Lord and his ultimate object of attainment is the Supreme Paramatman, who is his innerself, he gains the necessary qualification for becoming a Bhaktiyogin.

Thus Jnanayoga is as taught in the Gita – reflection upon the pure nature of the Jivatman. It is not the meditation upon the oneness of the atman or meditation upon Paramatman. As it is clearly mentioned that one becomes qualified for Bhaktiyoga only when he realises that he is seshabhuta or utterly subservient to the Supreme Lord, it is established that Jnanayoga mentioned here is related to the meditation upon the Jivatman.

Bhaktiyoga is the continuous loving remembrance of the essential nature, divine form, auspicious qualities and glories of Paramatman, who is the one independent reality,

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not subordinated to anyone whatsoever. The Lord is established in himself and he is not subordinate or subservient to any other person. Every other entity, sentient or non-sentient, is supported, ruled over and used for his own purposes by Paramatman.

भक्तियोगः परैकान्तप्रीत्या ध्यानादिषु स्थितिः ।

This kind of reflection or remembrance is a continuous process just like a stream of oil poured from one vessel to another. This will be of the form of vivid perception of the Lord. This kind of remembrance should be similar to the vivid perception of the Lord. This, due to its intensity, will result in direct vivid perception of the Lord. How long should one practise this ? This should be practised day in and day out, until the day, he passes from the body through 'archiradi' to attain Paramapada. This meditation is a Janana-Santati-Vishesha or a series of a particular kind of knowledge of Paramatman which culminates in the final remembrance of the Lord.

This Bhaktiyoga is to be supported by various accessories such as the performance of the Varna-Ashrama Dharmas, the ordained duties of one's station in life, by which one will enhance his satva, subduing rajas and tamas. This Bhaktiyoga is a means for attainment of all the four objects of life, according to one's own desire. The Lord declares in the Gita that a Jnani who has single devotion towards the Lord and is ever united with the Lord is most celebrated. All others, aspiring for wealth or self-experience, are missing the ultimate object of life that is liberation from samsara. The attainment of others is only transient and little.

Bhaktiyoga which is prescribed as the means for

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moksha is called by the name 'Para-Bhakti'. 'Samanya-Bhakti' or love towards the Lord, which is generated on account of association with the virtuous, will be the cause of 'Para-Bhakti'. For gaining this 'Para-Bhakti', one has to gain the knowledge of the reality through the shastras, practise Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and gain realisation of the true nature of the jivatman through yoga. This 'Para-Bhakti' leads to a strong and intensive desire to realise the Lord. The aspirant then implores the Lord to show himself, as He is, one day. This is the stage of 'Para-Bhakti'.

The next stage is called "Para-Jnanam'. This is the 'Paripurna Sakshatkara' or wholesome realisation of the Lord, that is granted by the Lord for a shortwhile, by his benign grace awakened by the intense desire of the aspirant.

The next and most important stage of Bhaktiyoga is 'Parama-Bhakti'. This is infinite love for the Lord, which cannot rest without realising him always. When an aspirant has a flash of the realisation of the Supreme Paramatman, which is of infinite bliss, he cannot contain himself without gaining him eternally. He feels great affliction, just as a highly thirsty person feels, when he sees a lake. He would like to quench his thirst by attaining it. Similarly, an aspirant in the state of Parama-Bhakti, will have such a strong desire that he cannot bear himself without experiencing the Lord even for a moment. Nammalwar has expressed his anguish in the decad 'मुनिये नान्मुहने' । He will cry and implore for immediate realisation of the Lord piteously, that the Lord cannot turn down his prayer. This Parama-Bhakti causes an urgency or 'tvaratishaya' in the Lord that he grants his eternal union to the aspirant and enables him to gain liberation by fulfilling his intense desire.

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This Bhaktiyoga can be practised by the three higher castes, and is not possible of being undertaken by others. This Bhaktiyoga is a direct means to the attainment of Paramatman. This yoga also, is possible only when a person surrenders unto the Lord and prays for his grace for commencement of Bhaktiyoga and also for completion of Bhaktiyoga. In the Gita, the Lord has ordained self-surrender as an 'Anga' or accessory to the practice of Bhaktiyoga.

For those people, who are incapable of adopting the means of Bhaktiyoga, the shastras prescribe the means of prapatti or self-surrender. Four conditions are necessary for Bhaktiyoga –

1) One should have the ability (or shakthi) for practising Bhaktiyoga ;
2) One should have gained necessary knowledge from the shastras regarding the various factors;
3) One should not have the disqualification for Bhaktiyoga, such as birth in the lowest order, etc.
4) One should have the satvic patience for obtaining the final result after the exhaustion of all prarabdha karmas by experience.

In the absence of any one of these conditions, he will not be qualified for Bhaktiyoga. Even among the higher three orders of the society, if one has deficiency in knowledge or ability or in both, or if one cannot bear delay in obtaining liberation, he is not qualified for Bhaktiyoga, and such a person, should realise his inability for Bhaktiyoga and should choose the path of prapatti, which is the direct means of liberation. Prapatti is a path for which all people, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, are qualified.

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Prapatti is, like Bhaktiyoga, a means for attainment of all desires. It stands in the place of 'Para-Bhakti' and a person who adopts this means, can also attain according to his desire, the successive stages of Para-Jnanam and others. The disqualification for Bhaktiyoga, happens to be the qualification for prapatti.

Prapatti and Bhakti are thus meant for two different kinds of aspirants; though these two paths are different, they lead to a common goal i.e., attainment of Paramatman. The idea is the fruit of these two paths is the same. As upasanas are of different kinds, as expounded in the Upanishads and the Brahmasutras, for Prapatti also, various mantras have been prescribed by the Agamas and Samhitas. The different mantras are particularly used by different Acharyas, as authorised by the different branches of Vedas, Bhagavath-Shastras and Samhitas. As namaskara is of three types viz. Vachaka, Kayaka and Manasa i.e. through words, through body actions and through mind, even in prapatti, these differentiations are mentioned. When all the three are taken together, there will be a poorna-namaskara. Similarly, when all the three are united, there will be poorna-prapatti. Manasa-prapatti is of supreme importance here.

Concluding this chapter Desika says that wise people take delight in the final words of the Lord Krishna spoken to Arjuna as 'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज । अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः' - 'शरण्य सारथिगिरां अन्ते रमन्ते बुधाः'।

Thus prapatti is expounded here as a sufficient and direct means to liberation as it is a necessary accessory for other means such as Karma, Jnana and Bhakti.

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CHAPTER - X

Prapatti Yogyadhikara

In this chapter, the eligibility of an aspirant for performing prapatti is described. This section along with the succeeding two sections, forms one unit. In the twelfth section, the mode of performance of prapatti, along with the accessories, is outlined. The earlier chapters from 1 to 11 are expounding the prerequisites that are to be known for self-surrender to be actuated. In this section, it is established that an aspirant who is incapable of practising Bhaktiyoga and who has no other means of salvation open to him, is qualified for prapatti. Even one, who is qualified for Bhaktiyoga, but incapable of bearing delay in attainment, is qualified for prapatti.

A spiritual aspirant should have 'Arthitva' or keen sense of wanting along with three necessary requirements viz. (1) sound understanding of the essence of the shastras; (2) capacity to practise those teachings and (3) the qualifications of possessing the prescribed qualities and birth in the higher three varnas. All these combined with the strong feeling of aspiration or desire for being liberated, make one qualified for undertaking spiritual discipline. This is the general requirement for undertaking the spiritual discipline. This discipline is of two kinds viz. 'astangayoga' or bhaktiyoga and 'Shadangayoga' or Prapatti. For the Bhaktiyogin, he has to fulfil three conditions (1) a perfect understanding of the shastra that prescribes the means to be adopted; (2) capacity to practise that and (3) qualification of birth in the higher three varnas. These three make him

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entitled to Bhaktiyoga. Whereas, regarding Prapatti, one should have a general understanding of (1) the means prescribed in the shastra; (2) ability to perform self-surrender and (3) inability in following any other means.

The scriptures declare that the Lord is possible of being attained by prapatti. This path of spiritual discipline is applicable universally to all just as the cardinal virtues viz. satya and dharma are applicable to all people, irrespective of any difference in caste and others. As these virtues are 'sarvadhikara' or related to all people, prapatti also is prescribed in respect of all people irrespective of any difference whatsoever. 'सर्वस्य शरणं सुहृत्', मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये, and other such vedic statements as well as the statements of smrithis establish that Prapatti or self-surrender, is a spiritual means of obtaining liberation, which applies to all castes and creeds.

A person who wants to adopt 'Nyasa Vidya' for attaining the object of his desire, being incapable of following other means, or having no interest in following other means, should necessarily know the particulars for his competency. For that, two things are necessarily required: (1) Aspiration for obtaining the particular fruit or phala and (2) Capacity to practise the same. Ability is to be known in respect of three factors viz. a thorough knowledge of the shastra; ability to follow those rules and eligibility on account of qualities and birth.

When a person has got 'Arthitva' or desire to gain liberation and when he adopts the means of prapatti for gaining liberation directly, he must have the knowledge of the inescapable relationship between himself and the Paramatman, as known from the shastra, even as Bhaktiyogi

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knows. His utter helplessness or 'Akinchanatva' is to be particularly realised. He must be aware of his inability to undertake any other means such as karmayoga, jnanayoga and bhaktiyoga. Another particular qualification of a prapanna is 'Ananya-gatitva' i.e. he must be averse to objects of attainment other than the Supreme Paramatman. He should consider Paramatman alone as the sole protector and none other than Him. Such an aspirant will not seek the help of anyone other than Paramatman, nor does he seek to gain any object other than Paramatman. This is described as 'Ananyopaya' and 'Ananyaprayojana'. It is said in the smrithi as follows :–

ब्रह्माणं शितिकण्ठं च याश्चान्या देवताः स्मृताः ।
प्रतिबुद्धा न सेवन्ते यस्मात् परिमितं फलम् ॥

"Those who aspire for moksha, do not worship the four-faced Brahma or Rudra or any other god, and take refuge with them from whom only little benefit is gained."

When a person has not an intense desire for getting liberated, but has interest in the continuation of the body and other things, and performs self-surrender for gaining liberation, the fact of his getting moksha will be delayed so long as his thirst for worldly things does not subside. Not bearing with delay in gaining the ultimate object of life i.e. liberation from samsara, is one of the important aspects of 'Ananyagatitva'. Such an aspirant will have an unshakable determination that he is solely subservient to Paramatman alone. The ancient masters and the Alwars have given expression to this kind of 'Ananyagatitva' very significantly. Being discarded by his own father, the gods and the great sages, that Kakasura having gone through the three worlds,

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came down to Rama and surrendered himself at the feet of Sri Rama.

स पित्रा च परित्यक्तः सुरैश्च समहर्षिभिः ।

त्रीन् लोकान् संपरिक्रम्य तमेव शरणं गतः ॥

'अहमस्म्यपराधानां आलयः अकिंचनः अगतिः' says the great sage Yamunacharya.

'अनागतानन्तकालसमीक्षयापि अदृष्टस-न्तारोपायः', 'तत्प्राप्तये तत्पादाम्बुजद्वयप्रपत्तेः अन्यत् न मे कल्पकोटिसहस्रेणापि साधनमस्तीति मन्वानः" says Ramanuja in Vaikuntha Gadya. This much is the eligibility for one to surrender unto the Lord. This means is open to all without any distinction of caste, creed, colour or sex or any other thing.

Desika describes in the concluding verse of this chapter, that there will be fifteen kinds of aspirants for performing prapatti by virtue of having one, two, three or four of the conditions such as –

1. inability to practise Bhaktiyoga
2. not having perfect knowledge of the scriptures
3. being disqualified by birth
4. not bearing any delay in attainment of godhead.

Those who are qualified for Bhaktiyoga may also adopt self-surrender, if they yearn to attain the highest without any delay. This is a means which is open to all types of aspirants. Such is the glory of this means.

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CHAPTER - XI

Parikara Vibhagadhikara

In the previous section, the essential nature of an aspirant, competent to adopt this means of self-surrender, was described. It was also pointed out that prapatti was a self-sufficient and adequate means for attainment of moksha. It was declared that prapatti does not require the very many accessories that are inevitable for Bhaktiyoga. Though this spiritual means does not require the accessories of Karmayoga or Jnanayoga, Astangayoga and others, it is necessarily having five accessories for becoming effective and these accessories have been prescribed in the shruties and the nature of these essentials of Prapatti are described in this section.

This means of attainment of moksha is described as 'Shadvidha Sharanagati'. This does not mean that they are six types of 'Sharanagati', but it is verily one, called by different names such as 'Nikshepa', 'Bharanyasa', and Thyaga. This is characterised by the five accessories. This is to be performed once along with the five accessories as prescribed in the scriptures at the feet of the all compassionate Lord, who is the inner controller of all entities other than himself and who is waiting for an occasion to redeem erring humanity.

निक्षेपापरपर्यायो न्यासः पञ्चाङ्गसंयुतः ।
संन्यासः त्याग इत्युक्तः शरणागतिरित्यपि ॥

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The accessories for entrusting the burden of one's protection to the Lord, are as follows :-

आनुकूल्यस्य संकल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम् ।

रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासः गोप्तृत्ववरणंतथा ।

आत्मनिक्षेप कार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः ॥

1. Anukulya Sankalapa

A decision on the part of the aspirant to be agreeable to the Lord in all his actions.

2. Pratikulyasya Varjanam

Giving up totally all activities that are disagreeable to the Lord.

3. Karpanyam

Realising one's own utter helplessness to gain the object of his life.

4. Maha-vishvasa

Supreme faith in the Lord that he would surely save him.

5. Goptrtva - varanam

Choosing the Lord to be his protector with a prayer.

The statement 'Shadvida Sharanagati', found in the verse quoted from 'Ahirbudhnya Samhita' - (37-28,29) does not prescribe 'Sharanagati' of six types; but, it signifies 'Sharanagati', the main means characterised by its accessories, as in the statement 'Astangayoga', which is including the main factor 'Samadhi' along with the seven accessories such as Yama, Niyama, etc. Entrusting the burden of protection is the

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main factor, and the other five are accessories to that. The Lakshmi Tantra declares definitely that the five are accessories to 'Nyasa' in the following verse :-

निक्षेपापरपर्यायः न्यासः पञ्चाङ्ग संयुतः ।

संन्यासस्त्याग इत्युक्ता शरणागतिरित्यपि।

(Lakshmi Tantra 17-74)

This means is called by different names such as 'Nikshepa', 'Nyasa', 'Samyak-Tyaga' and 'Sharanagati' and it is qualified by the five accessories. Taking into consideration, the totality of the main factor and its accessories, it is called 'Shadangayoga'.

These five accessories are the natural conditions that exhort the aspirant to offer himself to the Supreme Paramatman for getting protection. In the absence of any of these factors, the self-offering becomes impossible.

'Anukulya Sankalpa' and 'Pratikulya Varjanam' result out of his 'पारार्थ्य ज्ञानम्' or the awareness that he is for the sake of the Paramatman alone. On account of this, he wills to serve the Lord in all possible ways and determines to do whatever is agreeable to Him and to avoid whatever displeases Him. He realises that the entire universe forms the body of the Supreme and therefore resolves to act in a way which is agreeable to all beings.

चराचराणि भूतानि सर्वाणि भगवद्वपुः ।

अतस्तदानुकूल्यं मे कार्यमित्येव निश्चयः ॥

'Karpanya' - or utter helplessness that is realised by one, is an essential factor for deserving the mercy of the Lord.

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This is the reflection of one's own unworthiness for saving oneself, and it may be the absence of 'Garva' or pride that he is capable of saving himself. This is, in fact, a sense of genuine humility that will win him the mercy of the Lord. On account of this fact, he will not think of any means other than Paramatman for gaining his object of desire, and thus, it will be helpful for gaining 'Ananyopayata'. This heightens the compassion of the Paramatman, who is the protector of all.

'Maha-vishvasa' or Supreme Faith in the saving grace of the Lord, is absolutely essential for observing Prapatti. This will enable the aspirant to entrust his protection to the Lord with unshakable confidence in Him. As this is helpful at the time of performing Prapatti, it will ensure the aspirant to be free from all cares and anxieties about his protection even after the performance of Prapatti. Maha-Vishvasa or Supreme Faith is the very fundamental factor for the actualisation of Prapatti.

'Goptrtva-varanam'

One should seek the Lord to become his protector in very clear terms. The Lord is the granter of all benefits that are prayed of Him, irrespective of their being agreeable to Him or disagreeable i.e. whether they are 'Purushartha' or 'Apurushartha'. The Lord grants the benefits only when He is prayed. One cannot get any benefit without asking for it. The Lakshmi Tantra points out that protection would not be given when it is not sought. 'अप्रार्थितां न गोपायेत्' ।

'Gorptrtva-varanam' is a submission regarding one's intention. 'गोप्तृत्ववरणं नाम स्वाभिप्राय निवेदनम्' ।

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These five accessories are most helpful at the time of performance of Prapatti. These are inseparable with the performance of Prapatti.

Along with these accessories, one has to offer actually oneself to the 'Sarva-Sheshi' at the time of surrender. This factor or 'Atma Nikshepa' is very significant and absolutely necessary because without this surrender, and entrusting the Atman to the care of the Lord, the aspirant cannot be protected. The object to be saved, should be actually handed over to His care. This is the main factor and when the atman, that is to be protected, is made over to the care of Paramatman, the universal redeemer accepts it and surely protects. Having thus entrusted to the Lord, the burden of protection of one's self, by actually handing over to his care, the aspirant becomes freed from anxiety and fear.

Desika has given two classical instances of surrender, selected from the Ramayana, and has illustrated how in each case, all these five components are to be understood.

The first instance is the surrender of Trijata unto Mother Sita for obtaining protection from Sri Rama. Trijata urges demonesses to seek protection from Sita. She asks them not to speak harsh and cruel words to Sita. 'तदलं क्रूरवाक्यैः वः' - This is indicative of 'Pratikulya-varjanam'. She advise them to use kind and mild words सान्त्वमेवाभिधीयताम् । As speech is the very reflection of the mind, this suggests the accessory of 'Anukulya-sankalpa'. 'Akinchanatva' or utter helplessness is suggested by the statement 'राघवाद्धि भयं घोरं राक्षसानां उपस्थितं' which indicates their utter helplessness. Supreme faith in Mother Sita, is suggested by the statement

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'अलमेषा परित्रातुं राक्षस्यो महतो भयात्' - which implies that even in case Sri Rama decides to punish some one, Sita would be able to make Him pleased to save the intended person. Even Anjaneya mentions that Sita alone would be capable of protecting the demonesses from Sri Rama. This is expressing Supreme Faith in Sita. A prayer for protecting them is made in the statement 'अभियाचाम वैदेहीं' - "may we beg of Sita to protect us". Thus, the five accessories of Prapatti are indicated in the words of Trijata. Handing over actually the atman to be protected is suggested by the word, 'Pranipatha' found in the statement 'प्रणिपात प्रसन्ना हि मैथिली जनकात्मजा'। Thus all the accessories along with the entrusting the object to be protected, are fully indicated in this statement. Though the demonesses were advised like this, to surrender themselves unto Sita, they did not actually surrender to Her, but they did not refuse the proposal. Sita, relying on the non-refusal alone, gave her protection to all the demonesses as 'भवेयं शरणं हि वः'।

In the instance of Vibhishana's surrender also, all these five accessories as well as the major factor of entrusting the burden of protection can be known from the statements made by Vibhishana.

Anukulya Sankalpa – or a resolution to be agreeable to Him – is noted in the statement, 'प्रदीयताम् दाशरथाय मैथिली'।

Restore Sita to Rama – an advice which was made to Ravana.

The statements of Vibhishana viz.' त्यक्त्वा पुत्रांश्च दारांश्च', 'परित्यक्ता मयालंका' indicate Pratikulya varjanam, or refraining from doing anything disagreeable to Him.

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Karpanyam or utter helplessness is suggested by the statement of Vibhishana that he has incurred the anger of the terrible Ravana, 'Ravana of evil designs', and 'that he has been ill-treated and insulted by Ravana' –

'रावणो नाम दुर्वृत्तः', 'तेन चास्म्यपमानितः'।

Mahavishvasa or Supreme Faith is indicated in these words of Vibhishana.

'सर्वलोकशरण्याय राघवाय महात्मने'

"I surrender unto the Great Rama, who is the one refuge of all worlds."

Goptrtva varanam or seeking protection, and Atma-nivedana or actual surrender of one self to be protected, are indicated in the statement

'राघवं शरणं गतः'

"I surrender unto Rama."

This surrender is through a mediator or a 'Purushakara', as Vibhisahana prays to the 'Monkey Chief' – Sugriva – to take him to Sri Rama for protection, in the words 'निवेदयत मां क्षिप्रं' – offer me to the Lord without delay.

The protection given to Vibhishana was extended to the four followers of his also, as they were included in his surrender.

The surrender of Trijata similarly, is to be understood as inclusive of her close relatives and associates.

All these factors are to be reflected upon in the dvaya mantra, which is the mantra followed in surrender :–

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When the supreme nature of Paramatman is reflected some doubts may arise in our minds. Desika has pointed out those doubts and answered them convincingly as follows –

1. The Lord is omniscient and omnipotent.

   When the Lord is of this supreme nature, how can it be said that he is approachable by those, who have committed endless sins ?

2. He is granting the results to all people, only according to their respective karma.

   How can it be said that he would grant infinite benefit of liberation to those who have committed infinite offences ?

3. He is never looking forward for any benefit from any one.

   How can it be said that he would grant the Supreme benefit to one who has done very little effort ?

4. He is not granting prayers quickly , as any other petty gods.

   How can it be said that he would bestow on them without delay, the Highest Benefit ?

5. There is no one equal to Him or greater than Him, and He is the Lord of all.

   Is it proper to say that he would grant the Highest Benefit to all without considering their differences ?

These five doubts about the nature and grace of the Lord, are cleared on the basis of the truths signified by the words of the dvaya mantra.

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When one reflects upon the five factors viz., (1) Purushakara; (2) Sambandha (or relationship) (3) Guna (or auspicious qualities); 4) Vyapara (or functioning) and (5) Prayojana (or benefit) that are taught by the dvaya mantra, the above doubts get cleared.

Though the Lord is omnipotent, He is inseparably associated with Goddess Sri Mahalakshmi, who is the purushakara or a mediatrix. On account of the mediation of Goddess Sri, the Lord will, as in the case of the attendants in the inner apartment, excuse all offences that are obstructions to approach Him. He will not see the faults of those that surrender unto Him on account of the intervention of Sri, which He cannot turn down. So, one who surrenders unto Him, can approach Him. The mother, who is full of affection for humanity never knows punishment and she pleads on behalf of erring humanity, with the Lord and secures our protection. So, one need not feel that he cannot approach the Supreme Lord on account of one's own transgression of divine law.

The second doubt is that the Lord awards the fruits of karma, according to their merits, and therefore, He does not grant the infinite benefit of moksha to those who have committed infinite sins that are obstructions for the attainment of the highest object of life. This apprehension is cleared in the following way :-

The Lord is no doubt the dispenser of results according to one's action good or bad; but, He will become pleased with the surrender that is made unto Him and on account of that pretext, He will grant the infinite fruit, which is naturally His right, just like one's right to paternal property, as he is eternally related to Him as His Dasa or Attendant.

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This relationship between the aspirant and the Lord is irrevocable and on account of this intrinsic relationship of शेष and शेषि, the Lord becomes pleased and grants him the infinite fruit.

The third doubt is that the Lord does not expect anything from anybody, as He has attained all desires and is a 'Paripurna'. What has He to gain by saving any one ? He does not expect anything for his own sake, as other petty gods. So, why should He save anybody that seeks Him ?

The answer to this doubt is as follows –

Though the Lord is not expecting anything in return, He is just like a virtuous sovereign, who is won over by even a little pretext done in favour of Him. The Lord is an ocean of infinite compassion and yet He considers even the little service rendered to Him as a great benefaction and grants their desires being grateful to them for that little service. The Lord is so noble and great that He feels that He has not responded enough to His devotee even after granting the greatest benefit of moksha.

The next doubt is that He is not granting the prayers of His devotees very soon as other little gods do. So, it is said that we do not know when He is going to condescend to our prayers. This doubt is solved as follows :–

The Lord may grant at the proper time the fruits of actions offered unto Him in respect of other disciplines than self-surrender. When an aspirant surrenders unto Him alone, without aspiring for any other benefit (Ananya Prayojana) and without seeking protection from any other deity (Ananya Sarana), the Lord who is known for His generosity and compassion, grants the fruit for which one has

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surrendered at such a time that the 'prapanna' desires, without depending upon any other factor, other than his true will, just as He granted protection without delay to that Kakasura and Vibhishana. Prapatti or self-surrender, is an extraordinary means that warrants immediate award. For other disciplines, such as Bhaktiyoga and others, one may have to wait till that means becomes perfect; but, for Prapatti, there will not be any delay. At whatever time the Prapanna desires, the Lord grants those desires according to the prayer of the aspirant.

The next doubt is – How can it be thought that the Lord is going to grant the desires of prapannas without any discrimination whatsoever ? The answer to this question is that the Lord has the quality of 'Swatantra' and others and he fulfils the desires of those that seek protection with Him, for His own benefit. When He saves one soul from samsara, it is not the gain of the soul but it is the gain of the Lord. The Lord saves those that seek His protection just for gaining those souls on His side.

Any doubt that is entertained, may be got over like this, as we see in this world. So, the means of self-surrender, is established according to shastras, as a desired means to all people. Unless one realises all these factors, he may not entertain supreme faith. The significance of these five apprehensions and answers can be known properly only when a virtuous preceptor blesses with his instructions to the disciple. In the ultimate analysis, it becomes established that the benign grace of the Acharya or Preceptor, will infuse confidence and faith in the saving grace of the Lord.

Though prapatti is a valid means for attaining the benefits that are very difficult to attain and though by

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performing once, one can attain that benefit without wasting energy, time or wealth, though one can attain one's object of desire at the particular time he desires, it is absolutely necessary that one has to gain Mahavishvasa, which is not easy to get. So this means, though appears to be very easy, is not all that easy. All these factors are to be reflected in the dvaya-mantra. The term that signifies 'Purushakara' in the poorva-khanda enables one to gain supreme faith. The helplessness on the part of the aspirant as well as the nature of this means, are to be known in the verb 'Prapadye'. The preposition 'Pra' and the verb 'Prapadye', combined with the word 'Sharana' and the usage of the first person of the verb, signify the essential nature of this means.

अहमस्म्यपराधानां आलयः अकिञ्चनोऽगतिः ।
त्वमेवोपायभूतो मे भवेति प्रार्थनामतिः ॥
शरणागतिरित्युक्ता सा देवेऽस्मिन् प्रयुज्यताम् ॥

"I am an abode of all transgressions or offences. I have nothing in my possession. I have no means. You alone should be my means. This kind of knowledge, ensuing in a prayer, is 'Sharanagati'.

For a person, who is incapable of following any other means, the Lord stands in the position of a protector, as generally known from all shastras. Not only that, He will be placed in the place of any other means and He will be the 'upaya' or means of attaining Him. The intention of this statement is that one should have a firm understanding that the Lord himself is his 'Upaya' and as 'Upayatva' is common to both chetana and achetana and therefore, the Lord whom he evokes like this as his upaya, implies choosing Him as a protector. The firm understanding that he is the upaya is

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literally known whereas 'Goptrtva-varana' or praying Him to be a protector is implied by sense.

In the conclusion of this chapter, Desika summarises the significance of these accessories, as follows :–

1. This means of Prapatti is having five accessories and when taken with the main factor, there will be six factors.
2. This is to be performed only once as prescribed by the Bhagavat Shastras.
3. The two viz. Anukulya Sankalpa and Pratikulya varjana, save one from all dangers of transgression of the divine command and desire for worldly things.
4. Karpanya signifies that there is no other support or means.
5. The Maha-vishvasa establishes firmly steadfastness regarding the means chosen.
6. Goptrtva varanam expresses the desire to be saved by Him.

In this way, the firm understanding of being totally subservient to the Lord is firmly established.

With all these accessories, one is obliged to offer his self to be protected by the Lord.

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CHAPTER - XII

Sangaprapadanadhikara

Having discussed about the various requirements that are essential for surrendering oneself unto the Lord, in this section, the mode of self-surrender, which is of the form of entrusting the burden of the protection of one's self to the Lord is described. This happens to be the prime factor in the process of surrender. Having qualified himself with an aspiration for liberation, having known in general terms the nature of the inseparable relationship with the Lord, and having known the several accessories that are essential for Prapatti, one becomes capable of performing Prapatti at the feet of the Lord. Whatever is described in the earlier sections will be immensely helpful to an aspirant to follow the main path of self-surrender.

In the introductory verse, the essential nature of Prapatti is clearly expounded. It is declared here as 'Bharanyasa' preceded by a prayer for protection. The essential nature of Prapatti is Bharanyasa. This is common to all people who seek the Lord to be their chief means of securing their object of desire. For people who aspire for different benefits, other than liberation, Bharanyasa is a necessity; but, surrendering of the 'swarupa' and 'phala' is not required. This entrusting of the burden of securing the object of desire, is to be necessarily combined with a prayer for his protection. The 'yachana' or prayer, signifies 'goptrtva-varanam'. This means of prapatti also is a kind of knowledge or 'mathi-vishesha'. This kind of understanding is called Prapatti. Prapatti is defined as 'अनन्यसाध्ये स्वाभीष्टे

महाविश्वासपूर्वकम् । तदेकोपायता याञ्छा प्रपत्तिः शरणागतिः' ॥ by ancient masters. Desika gives the definition of Prapatti according to this here as follows:–

अभीष्टे दुस्साधे स्वत इतरतो वा क्वचन तत्
भरन्यासं याच्चान्वितमभिवदन्ति प्रपदनम् ।
इतः पश्चादस्मद्यतननिरपेक्षेण भवता
समर्थ्योऽसावर्थस्त्विति मतिविशेषं तदविदुः ॥

"When one cannot obtain the object of his desire either by his effort or by the effort of others, he entrusts the burden of securing the object with some one along with a prayer or appeal for securing that object. This is called surrender. He prays to him that from the very next moment of his entrusting his burden, that object of desire, difficult to be gained, may be obtained by him alone, without requiring any effort on the part of ourselves. This kind of particular awareness of his burden of getting that object has been actually thrown on the shoulders of that Lord, is surrender. It is not mere knowledge of an appeal or prayer for protection. The idea of this is, that the person who has performed surrender like this, should be totally relieved of the cares or worries of obtaining that object from the very next moment of entrusting that burden to the other."

The essential nature of surrender which is the means of attainment of Paramatman, is as follows:–

It is not something of ours that we are making over to the Lord for protection. It is just like handing over an ornament to the lawful owner for adorning himself. It is clearly expounded in the 'Pranava' by the terms and suffixes

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that the Lord is the protector of all. The 'sarva-sheshin' or the master of everything, is having every other thing as 'shesa' or subservient entity unto him. When everyone is his 'shesha-bhuta', and everyone exists for the purpose of Himself, and as everyone is dependent upon that supreme principle, the aspirant has to reflect upon his subservience to the Lord even in surrendering himself unto the Lord. He has to realise fully that in the process of saving himself, and all that belongs to him, as well as in the fruit of his protection and the protection of all that belongs to him, that he is not related to all these independently or for the sake of himself. This kind of पारतन्त्र्यविशिष्ट शेषत्वानुसन्धानम् is absolutely necessary in Prapatti also.

One should have this reflection that the all-independent Ishvara, who is the 'sarva-sheshin' is himself protecting all, that are subservient to Him, through a pretext. All others, being utterly subservient to Him alone, and totally dependent upon Him, are not fit to be a 'Nirupadhika-Sheshi'. "When this atman is utterly subordinated to Him, just like a lump of clay, and when he is incapable of protecting himself, how can he be the protector of others?" "I am not capable of protecting myself as well as all things that are called as mine, as I am neither independent nor the prime enjoyer of the result." So, just as wisemen reflected "myself, my kingdom, wealth, my wife and dependents and my vehicles – all these are subservient to that Supreme Paramatman" 'आत्मा राज्यं धनं चैव कलत्रं वाहनानि च । एतद्भगवते सर्वं इति तत्प्रेक्षितं सदा ।।' One should have a definite understanding that one's self as well as those that belong to one, are only belonging to Him, the Supreme Paramatman. The burden of protecting all these things that belong to one,

also happens to be on Paramatman himself. "Except for that Supreme-self, Sri Hari, no one else is capable of protecting anybody." 'नहि पालन सामर्थ्यं ऋते सर्वेश्वरं हरिम्' ।

The entrusting of the burden of protection of one's self as well as all that belongs to him, is called 'Atma-Nikshepa'. 'आत्मात्मीय भरन्यासो ह्यात्मनिक्षेप उच्यते' । The Supreme Paramatman alone is the prime beneficiary. So, one should reflect that the fruit of protection also, is related to that Paramatman, who is the 'Pradhana-Phali'. This is pointed out in the following verse:–

तेन संरक्ष्यमाणस्य फले स्वाम्यवियुक्तता ।

केशवार्पणपर्यन्ता ह्यात्मनिक्षेप उच्यते ॥

"One who is being protected by that Lord, has no ownership in respect of the fruit of that protection. The benefit of protection is not for him. It is offered to the Supreme Keshava himself. This is called 'Atma Nikshepa'. The idea conveyed by this statement is that, the benefit of protection is necessarily related to the Supreme Lord who is the ultimate and prime beneficiary."

The performance of Prapatti is consisting of three 'samarpanas' or offerings. They are (1) the 'swarupa' (or the essential nature of the aspirant); (2) The 'bhara' (or entrusting the burden of protection) and (3) the 'phala' (or the fruit of protection). A 'mumukshu' (or an aspirant after liberation), whether he is a 'Bhaktiyogin' or a 'Prapanna', has to entrust the Lord with his 'swarupa' and the 'phala'. The surrender of these two 'swarupa-samarpana' and 'phala-samarpana' is common to both types of aspirants. The 'Bhaktiyogin' pursues the path of Bhaktiyoga, and does not

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entrust the burden of protection i.e. 'Bhara-samarpana'. He also has to surrender unto the Lord for enabling him to commence Bhaktiyoga and complete it; whereas, an 'akinchana' (or an aspirant who is incapable of following Bhaktiyoga) entrusts the Lord with the burden of protection i.e. 'Bharanyasa', in addition to the surrendering of 'swarupa' and 'phala'. For people who are desirous of gaining any object (i.e. people who aspire for all desires inclusive of liberation) have to adopt 'Raksha-Bharanyasa' or surrender the burden of protection to the Lord. Whether a person desires moksha or any other 'phala', from the Lord, he has to surrender the burden of his protection to the Lord. This may relate to the four kinds of aspirants as noted in the Gita. A 'Phalarthi' (or one who aspires for some benefit other than moksha) does not surrender the fruit to the Lord (i.e. Phala-nikshepa). An aspirant after moksha, surrenders both swarupa and phala to the Lord. A Prapanna surrenders swarupa, bhara and phala to the Lord. When he is surrendering his swarupa, he does not surrender 'sheshatva-jnana'. This is expounded in the following verse:–

मुमुक्षुमात्रसामान्यं स्वरूपादिसमर्पणम् ।
अकिञ्चने भरन्यासस्त्वधिकोऽङ्गितया स्थितः ॥
अत्ररक्षाभरन्यासः समः सर्वफलार्थिनाम् ।
स्वरूपफलनिक्षेपस्त्वधिको मोक्षकांक्षिणाम् ॥

An objection is raised here. When a person is performing surrender aspiring for some benefit, he should become the beneficiary. How can it be said that the Paramatman is the prime beneficiary? The answer to this question is as follows:–

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The Supreme Paramatman feels pleased when he grants certain benefits to the aspirants and feels happy, even as he enjoys the decorations and others done to a doll or a parrot and others. Desika describes this in verse 11 of Sharanagati Deepika–

पाञ्चालिकाशुकविभूषण भोगदायी
सम्राडिवात्मसमया सह मोदसे त्वम् ॥

"Just as one feels glad by decorating a doll or by re-shaping an idol and by keeping a parrot in a cage and feeding it with fruits and flowers, and allowing it to fly; similarly, the Lord enjoys, when the chetanas benefit from Him. So, He is to be taken as the 'Pradhana-Phali".

A person who has no knowledge of his essential nature also, can surrender, if he has got that definite understanding that he is subservient only to the Lord. As pointed out in 'Stotraratna' by Yamuna, a person can surrender unto the Lord, even if he does not know the essential nature, but realises that he belongs to the Lord.

A simile is given by Desika here. Just as a person who comes upon a transparent purse of a king, which bears his seal, and which contains a costly gem, hands it over to the king with the conviction that the king would accept it, though he does not know the nature of the gem in the purse. Similarly, if a person surrenders himself unto the Lord with the understanding that he belongs to the Lord, the Lord would certainly accept him and that soul would be freed from the 'nigraha' (or wrath) of the Lord for having stolen the 'atman' (that belonged to Him) from beginningless time.

From this, it becomes established that for surrender,

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sheshatva-jnana is absolutely essential, though one may not have the knowledge of the other essential characteristics. Desika explains the meaning of the verse

ममनाथ यदस्ति योऽस्म्यहं सकलं तद्धितवैव माधव ।
नियतस्वमिति प्रबुद्धधीः अथवा किं नु समर्पयामि ते ॥

(स्तो.र. ५३)

as not repenting for having surrendered early to the Lord. The implication of this verse, according to Desika, is as follows:–

"Whatever I am and whatever is here as mine, all that is verily yours alone. Having this enlightened knowledge that they belong to You alone, what can I offer You, anything as mine?" The idea is this, 'even when the atman is offered to you without having a thorough understanding of its nature, if it is offered with the feeling that he is offering something belonging to Him, then the offence of 'atmapahara' is remedied.' The point that is emphasised here, is that the atman should be offered unto Him, with the feeling that he is offering His (Paramatman's) own object to the lawful owner and that he is not offering anything of his to the Lord. These two verses 'वपुरादिषु' and 'ममनाथ' signify that the essential knowledge of 'अहमपि न मम' should be had while surrendering the atman to the Lord. 'I also belong to you alone' should be the reflection in entrusting the burden of our protection to Him.

Desika points out that in the dvaya-mantra, this kind of entrusting the burden of protection, should be reflected as follows:–

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The dvaya-mantra has the words 'शरणं प्रपद्ये' । The term 'sharana' along with the verb 'prapadye' signifies supreme faith as suggested by the verb, which has the meaning of 'knowing' (Jnanarthaka). The understanding of the means or upaya which is signified by the word 'sharana' is to be understood. Praying for protection (or goptrtva-varanam) is signified as included in 'sharanam-prapadye'. So, one should reflect in the two terms 'sharanam-prapadye', offering of the atman for protection to the Lord, as characterised by the reflection of subservience to Him alone.

The five accessories to Prapatti and the act of surrender, are here enquired into separately for getting a sound understanding of the significance. But, when Prapatti is performed, the main factor of surrender characterised by all the five accessories, are to be reflected as one unit, and to be performed at one time by one. Prapatti is to be performed only once for attainment of a particular object. It should not be performed again and again, because it will imply lack of trust in the Lord. This kind of performance of Prapatti, is compared to the shooting of an arrow at a target by a deft archer. Being well trained in many aspects, the archer shoots unerringly at the target at a single moment. The Upanishad says that the 'Pranava' is the bow and 'Brahman' is the target. 'Atman' is the arrow and without any inadvertence, the arrow is to be shot and lodged in Brahman. Like that, this act of surrender of the atman to the Paramatman is to be done once only, carefully.

The statement of 'Satyaki Tantra' –

अनेनैव तु मन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत् ।
मयि निक्षिप्तकर्तव्यः कृतकृत्यो भविष्यति ॥

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"By this mantra alone one should surrender oneself unto Me. He becomes one who has done what ought to be done, by doing the duty of surrendering unto Me".

This signifies that of all the mantras, the foremost is the Dvaya-Mantra, and the entrusting of the burden of protection is the main factor in self-surrender. 'Nikshipta Kartavyah' means 'Nikshipta Bharah'. One who has not entrusted completely, the burden of his protection, is not a person who has done what ought to be done. The particular mantra of surrender, which is signified as 'Anenaiva tu Mantrena' is indicative of other mantras also that are employed in surrendering of the self.

Desika has taught the way of performing surrender along with the accessories as follows:–

1. One should reflect that he is not the main doer or 'kartha', but the Paramatman alone. This 'kartrtva-tyaga' implies the abandonment of the kind of attachment that what is being performed is belonging to him.

2. One should also reflect that the phala or the fruit belongs to the Paramatman alone. This is 'Phala-tyaga'. 'Phalopayatva-tyaga' signifies that the Prapatti which is being performed is not a direct means for attaining his object, but it is only a pretext and that the Supreme Paramatman alone, is the direct means of attainment of the object.

3. All these four viz. 'Kartrtva-tyaga', 'Mamata-tyaga', 'Phala-tyaga' and 'Phalopaya-tyaga' are common to all 'Nivruthi Dharmas'. Along with all these, one should have the reflection of the five accessories of Prapatti; such as a resolution to be agreeable to Him, etc., which are helpful to Prapatti.

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With all these reflections, one should remember the line of compassionate Acharyas, and through the words of 'Dvaya-Mantra', one should entrust the burden of one's protection to Paramatman, which is inclusive of the surrender of one's essential nature (swarupa) as well as the fruit (phala). In this context, it is to be understood that a prayer for being the means of protection, has to be offered to the Lord.

It is to be understood here that it is justified that one should renounce 'kartrtva' as belonging to him, as that kartrtva has been given to him by the Supreme Lord. This will enable him to remember for all time to come that he is only subordinate to the Supreme Lord.

The justification for 'Mamata-tyaga' and 'Phala-tyaga' is this viz. the essential nature and other factors of his self and all that belongs to him, is verily subservient to the Paramatman alone.

The justification for abandoning the idea of the means to the phala or gaining of the object in Prapatti, i.e., फलोपायत्वत्याग is as follows:–

The performance of Prapatti by the aspirant for awakening the mercy of the Lord, is verily a remote cause for the fruit and it is a non-sentient one and is bereft of the will to grant the fruit. So, the upaya or Prapatti that is performed, is not the immediate cause of granting the fruit.

The means of getting the fruit or फलोपाय is the Supreme Paramatman alone. On account of his natural grace, He has been the prime cause of granting the Jivatman, the body and the indriyas as well as knowledge and

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preceptors and has been the cause of everything inclusive of the uttering of the 'Dvaya-Mantra'. He is characterised by the particular inclination with grace to grant liberation and He happens to be the immediate cause of granting the fruit and He stands as a substitute in place of that particular means for which the jivatma is incapable and helpless. How is all this known? How is this possible?

The essential nature of Paramatman, who becomes pleased when a difficult means is practised, becomes easily pleased when an easy way of spiritual perfection is practised, as known from the infallible scriptures that expound his 'Sarva-Sharanyatva', 'Sarva-Suhrutva' and his auspicious qualities of 'vatsalya' and 'karunya'. The shastras ordain that one, who is gained by the arduous path of Bhaktiyoga is possible of being gained by 'sharanagati' or Prapatti. The shastras alone, are the ultimate authorities for Prapatti, to be a valid means for attainment of Paramatman.

Nadadur Ammal has described the process of self-surrender along with the accessories as follows:–

"From beginningless time, I have transgressed the commands of the shastras and have erred against you and so I am born in this world" – "Hereafter, I will behave only agreeable to you. I shall not do anything which displeases you. I have no wherewithal to obtain you. I have decided you alone as my spiritual means. You alone must be means of attainment. Have I any burden thereafter, in averting the undesirable and attaining the desirable?"

In this statement, all the five accessories have been mentioned and in the last sentence, the fact of surrendering the burden of protection is mentioned.

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The five accessories viz. Anukulya-sankalpa and others are necessarily associated and had to be had only once at the time of Prapatti. This means that at the time of Prapatti, all these should be invariably followed. the agreeability to the Lord and others that continue after the performance of Prapatti, are the results of the performance of Prapatti, and they will continue for all time to come.

The accessories of Prapatti such as Anukulya Sankalpa or Resolution to be agreeable to the Lord and others are to be followed at the time of surrender. After Prapatti, these attitudes viz. avoiding anything that is displeasing to the Lord, behaving agreeably to the Lord and supreme faith in the loving grace of the Lord and others, do not get included in the accessories. Are they not necessary? How are these to be practised? If this question is raised, it is answered thus:–

These attitudes such as being agreeable to the Lord and others, are at the first moment of performance of Prapatti, accessories, and these, that continue after Prapatti, are the 'phala' or the fruit of Prapatti. As these are dependent upon one's 'Prarabdha Sukrutha', it is advised that at the time of surrender, one has to include in his self-surrender

1. agreeable behaviour for all time to come after Prapatti;
2. 'Niraparadha Kainkarya' or service to the Lord free from any offensive or sinful deeds; and
3. Liberation at the end of that body that has come upon him due to his 'Prarabdha Karma'.

All these three are to be included in his performance of Prapatti, at that time alone.

The summary of this chapter is condensed in one stanza at the end of this chapter.

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If a doubt is raised that the Lord alone is not all independent, but the jivatman also is independent as described in the sutra of Panini 'Swatantrah Karta'; and when it is like this, how can it be said that the jivatman has to surrender himself unto the Lord for being protected?

The Sruti decidedly describes that Paramatman alone is the ruler and prompter of the other two entities viz. jivatman and matter

युग्यस्यन्दनसारथिक्रमवति त्रय्यन्त संदर्शिते
तत्त्वानां त्रितये यथार्ह विविधव्यापार सन्तानिनि
हेतुत्वं त्रिषुकर्तृभाव उभयोः स्वाधीनतैकत्र तत्
स्वामिस्वीकृतयद्भरोऽयमलसस्तत्रस्वयं निर्भरः ॥

The jivatman is ever under the direction and rulership of the Supreme Lord and Paramatman is the controller of all other things. 'Prayogyah' or 'yugyah' means horses and others. 'Acharanam and Syandanam' is the chariot. 'Yuktah' means bound; 'Prana' means jivatman.

Just as the horses are yoked to the chariot, and driven by the charioteer, the jivatman under the domination of karma, is united with the body by the All Supreme Lord. Of the three entities, the activities are to be known as follows:–

The movement and others are common to the sentient and the non-sentient. The contact or 'Samyoga' is common to all the three. Knowledge and desire to act, are common to Ishvara and jivatman. Mutation in its nature is the unique feature of 'achetana' or non-sentient entities. Diminution or expansion of knowledge is unique to the jivatman. The unique function of Ishvara is supporting and ruling over all

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entities other than himself. 'Hetutva' or being the cause, is common to all the three, though Ishvara is the 'Pradhana Hetu'. 'Kartru-Bhava' i.e. being the 'ashraya' or resort for jnana or knowledge, 'chikirsha' or the desire to do and 'prayatna' or effort. Of these 'Kartru-Bhava' is common to both jivatman and Paramatman. But, being all independent and having everything other than himself under his rule, is unique to Paramatman alone.

'अन्याधीनकर्तृत्व रूप स्वातन्त्र्य' is only for the Supreme being, and it is not contradictory to the nature of the jivatman to surrender. So, it is to be concluded that it is imperative for the jivatman to surrender the burden of his protection to the Lord and it is also justified that the Lord bears the burden of protection of the jivatman, who has surrendered unto Him. So, the Lord is the protector of all and those that have entrusted the burden of their protection to the Lord will be relieved of all cares and worries.

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CHAPTER - XIII

Kritakrityadhikara

"When a spiritual aspirant has surrendered the burden of his protection to the Lord, who is omniscient and omnipotent, and a well wisher of all by his very nature, and when such a Lord has accepted the burden of protection, thus entrusted to Him, he has nothing more to do regarding that in this universe. He engages himself totally in the loving service of that Supreme Lord, who is an ocean of Supreme bliss, and becomes fulfilled. Though he was, prior to his surrender, an indigent person, now after entrusting the burden of his protection, he considers himself as one, who is most affluent on account of the attainment of loving service to the Lord. He is considered to be one who has done his duty that ought to be done."

The essential features of a 'Kritakritya', are described in this section. He will have no care or anxiety about his protection as he has un-burdened himself. A person, who has performed self-surrender at the feet of the Lord, will have absolutely no duty to perform in respect of his desired object as his part of duty is fulfilled by surrendering once the burden of protection to the Lord. As he has no responsibility of protecting himself, he feels highly relieved. He reflects on the assurance 'Ma-Shuchah' given by the Lord, who is all independent and whose will is infallible, and becomes care free, without any worry regarding his protection. The Lord has verily willed to grant the object of desire by saving him from all sins. He will have no doubt in the realisation of his aspiration, as he thinks of the Lord, who is trustworthy, capable and ever existing means of all

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attainments. He becomes 'Nirbhaya' or fearless and he discards totally other objects of life and other means of spiritual perfection. He becomes overjoyed when he thinks of the supreme object of life that he is going to gain, just as a poor man comes to gain a great wealth without any effort. He becomes supremely delighted and will not have any relationship with other deities like the four-faced-Brahma or Rudra and others, who are all 'kshetrajnas' or jivatmans, just like himself. It is declared that a person who surrenders unto Supreme Narayana, is not a servant of any other deity. "He, who surrenders unto Sriman Narayana, who is the one refuge of all, and who is the one preceptor of all in this universe, is not the servant of either the gods or sages or other entities or human beings or the manes. He is not indebted to anyone here."

देवर्षि भूतात्मनृणां पितृणां न किंकरो नायं ऋणी च राजन् ।
सर्वात्मना यः शरणं शरण्यं नारायणं लोकगुरुं प्रपन्नः ॥

When such a person has to perform the duties of his station in life, such as the panchamaha-yajnas he may be offering worship to various deities, but all those terms and names relate to the Supreme Narayana through them and so he will have a firm conviction that he is worshipping the Lord alone through all these obligatory duties. This is declared in the following verse :–

ये यजन्ति पितॄन् देवान् ब्राह्मणान् सहुताशनान् ।
सर्वभूतान्तरात्मानं विष्णुमेव यजन्ति ते।

"Those who worship the manes, gods, brahmins, having the sacrificial fire with them, are in fact worshipping the one Great Lord Vishnu, who is the innerself of all beings".

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When the servants of the king garland their sovereign with garlands and decorate him with ornaments, they are placed on the body of the king they intend to worship like this, for gaining the love and goodwill of the king, who is the atman in the body. Similarly, all gods are bodies of the one Supreme Narayana, and when the gods are worshipped it is really Sriman Narayana who is the innerself that becomes worshipped. It is the Great Narayana, who has granted powers to those other gods to bless their respective devotees. If one worships these gods with the idea that he is worshipping these gods alone, and that these gods alone grant one's desires, one is not worshipping in the proper form. They will be worshipping in a different way or 'Avidhipurvakam'. So, when a prapanna undertakes to do this obligatory duties and when he utters the names of other deities, he must be always thinking of Sriman Narayana, whom he is serving through all these gods. So, he will not be doing a fault, if he utters the names of other gods and worships them as required by shastras prescribing his normal duties.

He has to obey commands of the Lord, as known from the shastras and never should he violate those commands. In this respect, he is similar to the liberated, who can know the intention of the Lord directly.

The prapanna is similar to the liberated, who will be rendering his little service to the Lord, and as he has observed the means of salvation, is a 'Kritakritya' or one who has done his duty and he is called a 'Krithartha' who has gained his 'Purushartha' or object of attainment.

Sri Ramanuja has described in the 'Sharanagati Gadya', how a 'Kritakritya' should be thinking in these words –

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अतः त्वम् तत्त्वतो मज्ज्ञानदर्शन प्राप्तिषु निस्संशयः सुखमास्व

"So, having absolutely no doubt as regards the attainment of my knowledge, my vision and my attainment, rest in peace."

The significance of this statement is as follows :–

"The 'samsari chetana' who was revolving in this world from birth to birth, on account of the wrath of the Lord, caused by the transgression of His command, was blessed with the compassionate glances of a virtuous preceptor on account of the grace of the Lord, waiting for an opportunity to redeem humanity. This fact of performing surrender at the feet of the Lord, by uttering the words of surrender as taught by the preceptor, is most effective in awakening the mercy and grace of the Lord and on account of this, all causes of displeasure of the Lord, have been removed and the Lord who is capable of transforming the migrating soul, will surely protect him on His own account."

"Placing full confidence in the Lord thus, you be without fear whatsoever." This is the essence of the statement of assurance given by the Lord as 'मा शुचः' the concluding statement of the charama-sloka'.

An aspirant should have sorrow and dejection prior to the performance of surrender unto the Lord. If not, he will not be fulfilling the conditions for seeking the grace of the Lord. 'Nirveda' or dejection is a necessary requirement for urgently seeking a preceptor for saving him from sorrow and misery. "If there is no cause, there will be no effect" – This is true in the case of a prapanna also; but, if he does not have full confidence in the assurance given by the Lord, and if he

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sorrows for his destiny after prapatti, the means of attainment of liberation becomes deficient, and the fruit will be delayed till that 'upaya' becomes fulfilled completely. It may be summed up that a person who is divested of doubt, sorrow and fear after surrender, is verily a 'Krita-kritya'. Desika concludes this section in a verse, the meaning of which is summarised below :–

भगवति हरौ पारं गन्तुं भरन्यसनं कृतं
परिमित सुखप्राप्त्यै कृत्यं प्रहीणमकृत्यवत् ।
भवति च वपुर्वृत्तिः पूर्वं कृतैर्नियत क्रमा
परमिह विभोराज्ञासेतुः बुधैरनुपाल्यते ॥

"To go beyond the vast ocean of samsara, the responsibility of protection was entrusted to the Supreme Lord, Sriman Narayana. Hereafter, to do anything for gaining little and transient objects of life like wealth, power or pleasure, etc., is unbecoming of a prapanna, just like prohibited action. His living in the world, goes on as determined by his past karmas, as before. The wise people who have unburdened their responsibility of protection to the Lord, implicitly obey the commands of the form of the scriptures, so long as they are stationed here.

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CHAPTER - XIV

Swanistabhijnanadhikara

A prapanna is one who is steadfast in the awareness of his own essential nature, which is different from non-sentient matter on one hand and the Supreme Paramatman on the other hand, who is the 'sarva-seshin', the siddhopaya and the supreme object of attainment. The understanding of these three namely the tattva, the hita and the purushartha should be firm and unshakable by any kind of perverse arguments in a prapanna. This awareness should be in him during all the time that he remains in this world after prapatti. This kind of steadfastness can be known from various factors that are significant signs showing that awareness. On account of the glory of this knowledge, the prapanna becomes capable of passing through the vast miseries that come across during the course of his life here. He will be capable of avoiding all kinds of unbecoming actions, such as seeking the grace of some one other than the Lord, worshipping those that are different from the Supreme Paramatman, studying the scriptures of other schools and thinking in vain of other things, etc.

These significant marks are to be realised by a prapanna. These are in one way the characteristics of a prapanna. In another aspect, they are 'sadhanas' or disciplines that are to be cultivated and to be achieved by a prapanna. These marks are just like the marks of a 'stita-prajna' or a 'gunateeta' or a fervent devotee of the Lord. One can examine one self and find out, if he fulfills all these conditions to call himself as a prapanna. This shows the mental attitude of a prapanna, who is solely devoted to the Lord.

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If a prapanna has the following characteristics, he can know that he is steadfast in his essential nature:–

1. When some one accuses him, and speaks of many faults, one should realise that they do not relate to his essential nature, but only relate to the body and others, and so, should be free from sorrow or depression.

2. As pointed out in the verse 'शप्यमानस्य यत्पापं शपन्तं अधिगच्छति' 'a person who abuses someone, would be amassing sin for himself, and would be getting tainted with the sin of the abused' – a prapanna should pity those people who abuse him and thus harm themselves by getting his sin.

3. When someone abuses a prapanna, he should feel grateful to the abuser, who will be reminding him of his faults plausible in him. 'Upakara-smriti' or having a sense of being helped by him for thinking of his nature, as pointed by Yamuna in the stotra-ratna as ' अमर्यादः क्षुद्रः' etc., and as expressed by Tirumangai Alwar in the verse 'I have grieved and grieved'. All the faults are plausible in him, and the abuser has done a good service to him by making him remember his faults.

4. A prapnna should be convinced of the fact that those that abuse him, are behaving so, only according to the will and prompting of the Supreme Paramatman, on account of his past karma as well as the past karma of the abuser. All people in this world are by their essential nature, dependent on Paramatman and are all dominated by karma. So, anything done by anybody, is on account of one's own karma alone and therefore, a

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prapanna should not become disturbed in his mind, when he is ill-treated or abused or insulted by someone.

5. When somebody humiliates a prapanna or abuses him, that prapanna should feel rejoicement as he will be exhausting the store of his past karma (prarabdha), by being subject to such kind of humiliation.

If one will be thinking on these lines, he can understand that he is steadfast in his essential nature, as understood from the first word i.e. 'pranava' and the second word viz. 'namas' or the supreme mantra 'Ashtaksharam'. The dropped dative case on 'Akara' अकार in the 'pranava', signifies the subservience of the jiva and the 'Makara' मकार signifies that he is endowed with 'jnanam' or consciousness which is to be agreeable to all living beings. The second word 'namas' signifies dependence on Paramatman, utter helplessness and wishing good of all, according to the will of Paramatman. He will be realising that he is subservient to and dependent upon the Paramatman alone, and he is to be used by the Supreme Paramatman, as He wills, and all these signify his essential nature and if a prapanna realises these things, he can know that he is steadfast in his essential nature.

Desika has described the characteristics of a person who is steadfast in the means of protection, he has adopted, in the following way:–

1. When a person has entrusted the burden of his protection totally to the Lord, he should have firm conviction that he, or any other person, is never his protector, even in the event of such causes of mortal fear such as – illness, attack from beasts like tiger and others; even when there appears to be danger to his

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life, he should not be disturbed in his mind, but should have total faith in the saving grace of the Lord. There should not be any worry on his part about what would happen to him, after the fall of that body. On the other hand, he should rejoice that he would obtain the ultimate object of his life i.e. salvation from samsara. It is pointed out in the following verse that a person would be afraid of 'mrityu' or death on account of not having done, what ought to have been done. That means, when he has done his duty of surrendering the burden of his protection to the Lord, and when He has received it with compassion, he would have no cares or worries about death. He would be eagerly waiting for death, as one would be waiting for a dear guest, a he has completed what he had to do. When he has thrown away the burden of his protection on the shoulders of the Supreme Paramatman, what else he has to do?

प्रायेण अकृतकृत्यत्वात् मृत्योरुद्विजते जनः ।
कृतकृत्याः प्रतीक्षन्ते मृत्युं प्रियमिवातिथिम् ॥

2. He should have complete faith in the Lord, to whom he has entrusted the burden of his protection, and he should totally give up his effort in his protection, and he should not seek assistance from anyone other than the Supreme Paramatman. The example of 'Sita' is given to illustrate such total faith – when Sita was under the protection of the mighty arms of Sri Rama, she did not feel any fear or anxiety on seeing an elephant or a lion or a tiger in the forest. Sita says to Ravana, "I do not reduce you to ashes by virtue of my might, on account of my vow of not making any self effort, and also on

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account of the absence of any command from Sri Rama". Sita says to Hanuman as follows, when Hanuman made a suggestion that he would carry her across the ocean to Sri Rama, "If Sri Rama takes me out of this enemy city 'Lanka' by overpowering this Lanks with his scorching arrows, and destroying the enemies, that would indeed be befitting to Him."

For averting all undesirables and for attaining all desirables, the Lord alone is capable and it is within his powers. If one who has surrendered the burden of his protection to the Lord, entertains total confidence in that Lord, and gives up all efforts of his for obtaining that object of desire, and if he realises that for all objects of his attainment, the Lord alone is the sole means of attainment, then one can understand that he is steadfast in the means of attainment he has adopted. This is prescribed in the former part of the Dvaya-Mantra, and the first half of the Charamasloka and the middle term 'namah' in the Tirumantra'.

What are the characteristics of the person, who is steadfast in the supreme object of attainment or 'Parama Purushartha'?

Desika describes them as follows:–

A person, who has surrendered himself and the burden of his protection along with the fruit thereof, to the Lord, should not be worried with his 'Deha-yatra' or course of his life in this world, as the course of his life is caused by the Lord, according to the karma of that individual that has commenced to give fruit. It is verily pointed out in the following verses thus –

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उत्पत्तिस्थिति नाशानां स्थितौ चिन्ता कुतस्तव
यथोत्पत्तिर्यथा नाशः स्थितिः तद्वद्भविष्यति ॥

"Of the three factors viz. birth, life and death, why are you ruminating over life itself? As origination and destruction happen, protection also happens".

'Wealth is going to choose one, who is sitting idle without doing any action; whereas a person who exerts a lot of effort, does not get even a little of water to drink' – This points out that the 'Deha-yatra' or daily course of life of a person, is destined according to his past karma, caused by the impartial Ishvara. So, a prapanna, who yearns for the ultimate object of attainment viz., moksha, should not worry for these trivial things.

Such a prapanna is advised to realise that all these earthly attainments are the results of the past karma and therefore his duty here is to follow strictly his dharma without any worry or anxiety. Even if one worries about such earthly benefits, he cannot get them, unless they are granted by the Lord. The following verses make this point clear:–

उत्पतन्नपि चाकाशं विशन्नपि रसातलम् ।
अटन्नपि महीं कृत्स्नां नादत्तमुपतिष्ठते ॥

"even if you leap to the sky or if you enter the nether worlds or if you roam around the world., you shall not get what is not given to you".

यत्किंचित् वर्तते लोके सर्वं तन्मद्विचेष्टितम् ।
अन्यो ह्यन्यच्चिन्तयति स्वच्छन्दं विदधाम्यहम् ॥''

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"Whatever exists in this world, all that, is caused by me; someone thinks of something else, but I ordain all that, according to my will" – says the Lord.

अप्रयत्नागताः सेव्याः गृहस्थैः विषयास्स्दा ।

प्रयत्नेनापि कर्तव्यः स्वधर्म इति मे मतिः ॥

"The objects of the world that come upon them without any effort, are to be experienced; but rendering supreme effort, one should protect dharma".

नाहारं चिन्तयेत् प्राज्ञः धर्ममेवानुचिन्तयेत् ।

आहारो हि मनुष्याणां जन्मना सह जायते ॥

"A wise man should not think of food; but he must think of dharma alone. Food comes here with his birth for all human beings'-

As mentioned in all these statements, a prapanna should experience those objects that come upon him without his effort, and that are not opposed to shastras, with the idea that the debt of 'prarabdha karma' is getting cleared.

A prapanna should have utmost interest in the divine service of the Lord, which is the supreme object of attainment and he should not rejoice or grieve for having attained earthly happiness or sorrow. Just like a 'stitha-prajna' he must have an equipoise of mind.

A prapanna of this nature cannot bear delay in attaining the supreme object of life viz., deliverance. If one has all these fulfilled in him, it can be understood that he is steadfast in the 'Parama-Purusharta' or the supreme object of life.

The dative case in the term 'Narayanaya' in the

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Mulamantra, and the dvayamantra, and the term 'namas', and also the second half of charamasloka, all these are pointing to the supreme 'Purusharta' as one points out with his finger a vast ocean.

The fruit or 'Parama-Phala' of attainment of this kind of steadfastness in his essential nature, the upaya or means of salvation and parama-purusharta, are described as follows:–

For such a prapanna, there will be nothing to fear other than offence towards a knower of Brahman and he will not entertain desire for anything other than 'svarupa-prapta-kainkarya' or service to the Lord, which will be according to his essential nature. He will be blessed with such a kind of noble attitude. He will neither rejoice in things that worldly people take delight, nor does he become afraid of things that cause fear to the worldly people. The example of Sita in Ashokavana is given to illustrate this point by Desika:-

नैषा पश्यति राक्षस्यो नेमापुष्पफलद्रुमान् ।
एकस्थ हृदया नूनं राममेवानुपश्यति ॥

"Sita does not look at the demonesses that strike fear and terror, nor does she look at the flower-trees, fruit-trees that cause pleasure. Her heart is set on Rama alone, and she is visualising him alone".

Thus, a prapanna who is steadfast in his essential nature is neither disturbed on account of causes of fear nor pleased with causes of joy other than loving service, to the divine. Even in case one gets interested on account of his past reminiscent impressions, it will not have any effect on him.

When a prapanna is stationed in this world betwixt samsara and liberation by destiny caused by the Supreme

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Lord, he will bear on his head "the steadfastness in his essential nature etc.," that is granted by the Lord just as the 'shesha-vastra', and lead the rest of his life, being fulfilled in his aspirations.

This is similar to the state of a 'sthita-prajna' or a 'jivan-mukta' or a 'gunaatita'. Desika states in 'Achyuta-Shataka' –

विषयरसेविरक्ताः विकारजननैरपि न खलु विक्रियमाणाः ।

जीवन्मुक्तसदृशाः अच्युत दृश्यन्ते पावनाः तव भक्ताः ॥

(Achyuta - Shataka - 47)

'O Lord, your devotees who are without any desire in the enjoyment of the objects of the senses, who never get detracted even by things that detract one are like Jivanmuktas, and they are holy and purifying others.

Thus in this chapter the behaviour of an ideal prapanna is expounded and the way in which the realisation of the knowledge of tattva, hita and purushartha should result in practice is shown.

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CHAPTER - XV

Uttarakrityadhikara

In this section, the duties that are to be performed by a prapanna, after prapatti, are pointed out for the guidance of those who have adopted the spiritual discipline of paraptti. A prapanna is bound to continue his life as destined by his past karma, and he has to follow a way of life that is in accordance with his nature. Just like a Jivanmuktha who is engaged in certain duties of life, so long as he is embodied, a prapanna also follows a course of action, which is befitting with his knowledge and aspiration. Though he has nothing to do for the sake of gaining moksha, he should not live an erratic life, so long as he is here. He must realise that he should lead a life divested of all sins, performing all the time the duties of his station in life, that have come upon him on account of his association with the body. His behaviour should be so ordained as that is 'swayam-prayojana' self sufficient or has the purpose of carrying out the commands of Paramatman, to please Him alone. He should not yearn for any other gain nor should he be attached to anything other than what is in accordance with his essential nature of subservience to the Lord. He will keep himself free from transgressing the commands of the Lord, and follow a virtuous life setting an example to others.

In the introductory verse of this section, Desika points out the duties to be performed after surrendering oneself to the Lord, as follows:–

सन्तोषार्थं विमृशति मुहुः सद्भिरध्यात्मविद्यां
नित्यं ब्रूते निशमयति च स्वादु सुव्याहृतानि ।

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अक्षीकुर्वन्ननघललितां वृत्तिमादेहपातात्
दृष्टादृष्टस्वभरविगमे दत्तदृष्टिः प्रपन्नः ॥

1. He will again and again study and reflect over the truths of 'adhyathma-vidya' i.e. the great Sri Bhashya as propounded by Bhagavan Ramanuja on the three foundational texts of vedanta for the purpose of deriving joy caused by the experience of the auspicious qualities of the Paramatman i.e., santhoshartham. As he has already completed his spiritual discipline and as he may not need the knowledge of this vedanta for adopting a spiritual means, he is advised to undertake such study for 'bhagavat kalyana-guna-anubhava' or enjoying the auspicious qualities of the Supreme Paramatman, which itself is of supreme benefit. This study is to be undertaken along with those who are well versed in the truths expounded in Sri Bhashya and other works. Desika points out that this kind of study should be undertaken again and again so that he may be firmly established in that Supreme Paramatman.

2. If one is not that capable as to go into the study of Sri Bhashya, he is advised to recite the nectar like hymns of the Alwars, such as Nammalwar and others. The soul stirring utterances of the God-intoxicated Alwars are more pleasing to an aspirant to a greater extent than even the compositions of Parashara and others, as they are composed in the spoken language of the masses, understandable to all. This is to be undertaken as 'swayam-prayojana' and these should be heard from teachers or taught to disciples.

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3. A prapanna should follow the course of his life which is pious and godly, so long as he is placed here in this world, and he must always think that there is no responsibility of his, either in things that are perceived or those that are not perceived (drishta or adrishta); what is perceived here is going on according to his past karma and what is unseen, is in the hands of Paramatman, who has taken over the burden of his protection. So, he need not worry for anything at all.

Having summarised the main features of the post-prapatti duties like this, Desika elaborates these points with a number of illustrations. A prapanna, who is a 'kritakritya', and who has known his 'nishta' or steadfastness, has in one way severed his relation with the world and in one way continuing the relationship with the world. He is here ordained to be for sometime, by the Lord, and whatever he acts should be 'swayam-prayojana' or for the sole purpose of pleasing the Lord, just like the loving service of the liberated which is most pleasing to them.

He will be practising here divine service, which he will be blessed with, after the fall of his body here.

All his actions should be for the pleasure of the Lord alone, and not for any gain, worldly or otherworldly.

The Alwars have given expression to the intense love for the Lord that the devotee has for the Supreme Paramatman, and they are illustrative of the behaviour or a prapanna who spends sometime in this world before attaining his eternal service in the Supreme Abode.

"I spent my time in study of scriptures and in listening to those great texts like Sri Bhashyam and others, serving

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Him in a humble manner, worshipping Him day in and day out, without wasting my time".

"Remembering the utterances of the seers that are admixed with the auspicious qualities of the Lord, I got rid of my immense sorrow, caused by sins in this world. If they do not get rid of their sins and miseries like this, how can they spend their time!"

"We must render our selfless service firmly in all states to that Supreme Paramatman alone, in all places".

These and others such statements of the spiritual saints show how one should spend his time in this world, till he attains the eternal abode of the Supreme Paramatman.

Such a prapanna should not desire for any gain other than the grace of the Lord and blissful service to Him. When he is performing promptly the duties of his station in life i.e. varnashrama-dharma, he should not have any sense of his supremacy and excellence over others that he has been very righteous. He must have a feeling of utter humility, and he must realise that he is totally at the disposal of that Supreme Paramatman always.

'पत्युः प्रजानामैश्वर्यं पशूनां वा न कामये'

He must not aspire for the glory of either Prajapati or Rudra, while going through the routine disciplines related to his duties in life. He must approach people who are knowledgeable for solving the doubts he may have regarding his duties.

He should have no disregard regarding things that he does not know under the pretext of 'kritakritya'. As knowledge and devotion are ever necessary, he should pray

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to the Lord to grant him devotion towards Him and knowledge regarding His nature. This prayer for Jnana and Bhakti will serve the purpose of great joy regarding the Supreme Paramatman, who is his Sheshin.

The following statements substantiate their state of life:–

वर्तमानः सदा चैवं पाञ्चकालिकवर्त्मना ।
स्वार्जितैः गन्धपुष्पाद्यैः शुभैः शक्त्यनुरूपतः ।।
आराधयन् हरिं भक्त्या गमशिष्यामि वसारान् ।

"Being a follower of the path of the five-fold duties (Panchakalika-karma), I shall worship with supreme devotion that Supreme Lord with flowers, sandal and other articles of worship earned by me and according to my ability. I shall serve Him alone, and pass the days." – A person should not beg of the Supreme Paramatman – Maha-Vishnu – anything other than devotion towards His feet and supreme knowledge of His nature. If he begs thus, he will certainly get destroyed!

तत्पादभक्तिज्ञानाभ्यां फलमन्यत्कदाचन ।
न याचेत्पुरुषो विष्णुं याचनान्नश्यति ध्रुवम् ।।

A person who has unburdened himself of the responsibility of his protection, should practise divine service here which will be a kind of probation for the eternal service of the Lord, when he attains the Supreme Abode, after the fall of his body. Tirumalizai Alwar exults that he spent his time usefully by studying the shastras for his atma-dharana, getting instructions from the Acharyas, offering obeisance to the Acharyas, and leading the life in a virtuous way and

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worshipping with supreme love the Lord of all (Thiruvandadi 63).

Nammalwar says "what I pray you, O' Lord! is that you should accept me solely for your sake alone" (Thiruvoimoli 9.2.4).

Periyalwar says 'there will be no hunger for me on days that I may not dine, but they are really fasting days causing pain on which days, I do not utter always your holy names, on days on which I do not worship you with flowers reciting the vedic hymns'. (Periyalvar Thirumoli 5-1-6).

Poigai Alwar says "my mouth does not praise any one other than my Supreme Lord. My hands do not venerate any one other than the Lord. My eyes do not witness anything other than the charming beauty of the Lord Krishna. My ears do not hear any vain talk, but only the sacred names of the Lord. I do not desire for others wealth. I do not mix with the lowly. I always move with the noble and exalted. I do not consider anyone other than the Supreme Narayana as the Supreme Deity. How can any sin occur to me?" (Mudal Thiruvandadi-11).

Desika has profusely quoted from the hymns of the mystic Alwars to show the ways of post-prapatti-duties in this section. It becomes established from all these that a prapanna will lead a supremely devoted life that is always full of divine consciousness and devotes his period of stay here to the loving service of Paramatman.

Other post-prapatti-duties that are pointed out in this section by Desika, may be summarised as below:–

1. A prapanna should approach his preceptors and gain enlightenment as regards the truths that he has not

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known. He should not be indifferent or disinterested in gaining such knowledge on the pretext that he is a kritakritya. It is ordained that at any state of life, even in his last stage of life, one should seek knowledge of Paramatman and devotion towards His feet.

2. A prapanna should seek the company of pious and godly people, who are well established in divine experience and devotion to Lord. The very glances of such pious people purify all sins.

3. A prapanna is ordained to perform the duties of his station in life i.e. varnashrama-dharma, sincerely according to his ability.

4. A prapanna should be very careful regarding his conduct in this world. Never should he think of himself as superior to others. He should be always humble in his attitude and should consider himself as lowest of the low. He should not also think of others as inferiors full of defects. He should tread his path in this world very carefully, being divested of 'ahankara' and 'mamakara' on account of his attainments.

5. A prapanna should always remember his 'akinchanatva' or utter helplessness though he has gained his salvation by the grace of the Lord. He must always reflect on the following lines –

अहमस्म्यपराधानां आलयोऽकिञ्चनोऽगतिः

"I am the home of all offences and I am utterly helpless. I am without any support."

As Nammalvar says "I have not performed karmayoga and others. I have no knowledge of atman. But yet, I know

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nobody other than yourself for saving me. You are the only goal for me." (Thiruvoimoli 5.7.1)

"What can I do? Who is to save me? What are you going to do with me? I know nobody other than Yourself." (Thiruvoimoli 5.8.3)

A number of such statements of the Mystic seers, make it clear that this mode of 'akinchanya' should be reflected upon.

When one has performed prapatti, and won the grace of the Lord, he should not brood over the past and get dejected on account of the unfitness he had from beginningless time. When the Lord has granted him refuge and when all his past sins have been divested of him by the grace of the Lord, he should not grieve over his past; but, feel solace that he has got rid of all that by the grace of the Lord and so he should engage with all ferver in loving service of the Lord.

6. A prapanna should subdue his sense organs and engage them in the loving service of the Lord.

7. The duties of his varna and ashrama that are performed, should be done purely for pleasing the Lord and not for any other benefit. The shastras should be strictly followed, but never for attaining any other benefit.

8. A prapanna should engage himself in the divine service of the 'archa' incarnation of the Lord, so long as he is stationed in this world. He should have the idea that the Lord himself is fully present in the Archa, and that the very worship of the Lord would free one from all great sins and sub-sins. When one has a vision of the Lord in archa-form all kinds of illusions and erroneous

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impressions through various causes get totally destroyed. The Lord says in the Gita that he would show himself to his devotees in the very same form through which he will be worshipping Him. One should with great love and affection worship the Lord in the Archa-form.

It is pointed out here by Desika that this kind of worship should be rendered with articles of worship that are earned by a righteous way (Nyayarjita).

In the end, it is pointed out that a prapanna should ever be full of gratitude towards his preceptor and towards the Supreme Paramatman, who is the general cause of everything in this universe. Desika points out that a prapanna should note what should be discarded mainly and what should be entertained mainly –

1. What one should discard totally is 'vishaya-swada' or experience of the sense objects.
2. One should discard totally 'atmotkarsha' or his own celebrity.
3. The most dangerous offence viz. offence towards knowers of Brahman, is to be totally discarded.

What one has to entertain always is as follows:–

1. The supreme benefaction done by the Acharya beginning with the 'prathama-kataksha' or primary look of compassion and showing the pathway of salvation. And the most important duty that is to be done is service to the Lord culminating in the loving service to the Bhagavathas such as Acharya and others.

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2. It is ordained that one should reflect on the inescable relationship of himself with the Supreme Paramatman everyday, in the supreme Mulamantra as a lover would see herself and the reflection of her lover in a cleaned mirror. The jiva who is signified by the term 'Ma' enjoys the vision of Paramatman signified by the letter 'Aa', as seen in the mirror, when that lover appears before her and the dative case of the term 'Narayana' implies that he is subservient only to that Supreme Narayana and not for himself. Thus, the truths expounded in this chapter, are to be reflected in the Mulamantra.

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CHAPTER - XVI

Purushartakastadhikara

In this section, it is expounded that service unto the preceptors and the godly ones, the Bhagavantas, that is ordained in the shastras, is the culmination of 'bhagavat-kainkarya' or loving service unto the Supreme Lord. It is pointed out that his subservience to the Lord, results in his subservience to the devotees of the Lord also, on account of the very will of that Supreme Lord, who is the Master of all, and who is the one independent Reality who can ordain all others to follow his commandments. He is capable of commanding his dependents to be subservient to His own devotees, who are supremely dear to him. As it is pointed out in the statement 'तस्मात् मद्भक्तभक्ताश्च पूजनीया विशेषतः' which means "my devotees and their devotees are to be worshipped with all regard." Such kind of service to the godly ones, pleases the Lord immensely and it is His supreme intention.

As the nityas and muktas render loving service unto the Supreme Paramatman by directly knowing His wish and cause Him delight, a prapanna who is a kritakritya is required to know the intention of the Lord through the shastras and render loving service unto Him so long as he is placed in this world. When one ponders over the wish of the Lord it is understood that service unto the Bhagavatas is most pleasing to Him.

Of the four objects of life the supreme purushartha is the attainment of Paramatman or Supreme Brahman. The liberated enjoys in full measure the bliss of Divine

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communion. The Upanishads, the Gita as well as the Bramhasutras expound that the mukta gains parama samya or equality with Brahman. 'परमं साम्यमुपैति' । The Alwars describe that the highest object of attainment is the attainment of eternal service to the Lord. It is explained by masters that the ecstasy of divine communion overflows in the form of loving service to the Lord. Bhagavan Ramanuja mentions in the gadya that the highest object of attainment is Nityakainkarya – 'नित्यकैंकर्यप्राप्त्यपेक्षया', 'नित्य किंकरो भवति'। This Bhagavat kainkarya extends upto Bhagavata kainkarya.

I. It is understood from a number of scriptural authorities, that service unto the devotees of the Lord is the 'abhimana' or desire of the Lord. 'Of all worships, the worship of Lord Vishnu is greater; but, greater than the worship of Lord Vishnu, is the worship of the Bhagavatas or the godly ones.

आराधनानां सर्वेषां विष्णोराराधनं परम् ।

तस्मात्परतरं प्रोक्तं तदीयाराधनं परम्।

"I have great affection towards the devotees of my devotees. Therefore, one should render significant service to the devotees of my devotees".

"मम मद्भक्त भक्तेषु प्रीतिरभ्यधिकाभवेत् ।

तस्मात् मद्भक्तभक्ताश्च पूजनीया विशेषतः" ॥

The Lord says "In whomsoever there is devotion which is of the following eight forms, even if he is of the lowest birth, he is to be considered as a great Brahmin, a muni, one who has conquered over his senses, a learned man, to him should be given supreme knowledge and from him should one gather knowledge. He is verily worshipful as I am."

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The eight-fold devotion mentioned above, are as follows:–

1. Affection towards my devotees
2. Supporting my worship
3. Supreme love in hearing my divine sports
4. Experiencing with ecstasy my divine actions, shedding tears of joy, speaking in a choking tone
5. Making an effort to worship me
6. Avoiding any kind of show in relations with me
7. Remembering me incessantly
8. Not exploiting me for maintaining his livelihood.

मद्भक्तजनवात्सल्यं पूजायां चानुमोदनम् ।
मत्कथाश्रवणे भक्तिः स्वरनेत्राङ्ग विक्रिया ॥
स्वयमाराधने यत्नः ममार्थे डम्भवर्जनम् ।
ममानुस्मरणं नित्यं यच्च मां नोपजीवति ॥
भक्तिरष्टविधा ह्येषा यस्मिन् म्लेच्छेपिवर्तते ।
तस्मै देयं ततो ग्राह्यम् स च पूज्यो यथा ह्यहम् ॥

Loving service unto the Bhagavatas, is verily stated to be service unto the Lord himself. A person who has understood the supreme nature of Paramatman, realises that the Lord himself is the innerself in all. He realises that the worship he renders to the Bhagavatas, is really worship to the Supreme Lord himself.

सर्वभूतान्तरात्मानं विष्णुमेव यजन्ति ते ।

As regards a 'paramaikanti' or a supreme devotee who has realised the Paramatman alone as his 'upaya' and 'upeya',

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the Lord considers him to be his own self., as he says 'ज्ञानीत्वात्मैव मे मतम्'। So, the intention of the Lord is that the devotee is his own self and so any service done to the Bhagavatas pleases immensely the Supreme Paramatman.

Subservience to the Bhagavatas is of two kinds viz. directly and indirectly. As the Lord happens to be having the devotee as his 'sheshin', so 'sheshatva' is direct and indirect. So even his service to the Bhagavata will be both direct and indirect. The Bhagavan has 'Bhaktadvara Sheshitva' and so this is 'sadvaraka' or indirect also.

The subservience to the Lord, culminates in subservience to the Bhagavatas, according to the intention of the most Supreme Paramatman.

The Supreme Lord can command his devotees to subserve anyone, according to his pleasure. He makes his devotees serve other devotees according to His desire. Tiruppanalvar says "The Lord has made me subservient to his ardent devotees." A king has freedom to adorn his subordinates or his elephant or horse with the garlands and ornaments that he wears. What devotees pray for is that they should attain subservience of those that are subservient to the Lord. So, this kind of fitness to be utilised according to the desire of the Lord is eternal and so, Bhagavata-seshatva is the culmination of Bhagavat-seshatva.

Subservience to the Bhagavatas is actualised in two ways – firstly, on account of the fact of their being Bhagavatas and as such subservience to the devotees is desirable to the Lord. This is 'swarupa-prayukta'. Secondly, this kind of subservience to the Bhagavatas, may happen on account of the knowledge related to the virtues of such a

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Bhagavata. This is resulting out of one's own free will. As Lakshmana said 'गुणैः दास्यं उपागतः' – as a younger brother to Rama, he was subservient to him by nature; on account of the auspicious qualities of Rama, Lakshmana became subservient to him by his own desire. This subservience to Bhagavatas reaches such a level that one considers oneself as disposable by the Bhagavatas, according to their will.

The 'dasatva' that is evolved with love towards the Lord on account of the auspicious qualities of the Lord as well as in respect of the Bhagavatas will be the cause of ever enhancing joy. The Lord causes 'Sheshitva' to all Bhagavatas by virtue of his independent will. To these Bhagavatas he causes 'Bhagavata sheshatva' also according to their desire. They attain 'Sheshitva' by virtue of becoming worthy of being disposed of by the Lord according to His will. They attain their purushartha to the maximum limit as the 'Bhagavata Sheshatva' and 'Bhagavata Kainkaryam' desired by them become fully realised.

The Lord becomes highly pleased by making these devotees mutually sheshas and sheshins. By this the Lord attains 'Ishvaratva' and 'Bhoktrutvam'. As these devotees realise that this kind of sheshatva and sheshitva that they have gained is subservient to the bhoktrutva of the Lord, they will have realised the culmination of thier 'Purashartha'

Periyalwar expresses that the Bhagavatas are authorised to sell or purchase him, as he is totally subservient to them.

A question may be asked whether the Bhagavata-Sheshatva is 'swabhavika' or an aspect of his essential nature or 'oupadhika' or conditional. It may be said that this is natural to the jivatman, as this continues even in the state of

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release for all time to come as pointed out in the statement 'नित्याभिवांछित परस्पर नीचभावैः' etc. Similarly, this is conditional also, as it is on account of the particular awareness of their relationship with Supreme Paramatman 'भगवत् संबन्ध ज्ञानविशेष निबन्धनम्'।

When the Bhagavatas are subservient to the Lord and as Bhagavatha-Seshatva is common to all, if one is considered as 'seshin' and in the same way he also considers the other as his 'seshin' i.e. if this relationship is mutual, will it not be contradictory? How can one be a seshin and a sesha at the same time?

Desika points out that there is no contradiction in this mutual relationship. According to the will of the Lord, this will be mutually subsisting for the excellence of each other. This kind of subservience or 'dasatva' which happens on account of the love of the Lord, is the cause of supreme joy to both. Dasatvam or subservience, in respect of the Paramatman and in respect of the Bhagavatas, is a source of supreme bliss. All this is desired by the most Supreme Paramatman and he enjoys immensely by ruling over the devotees in this manner. All this is subservient to the experience of the Supreme Paramatman.

The Purusharta kashta or the ultimate limit of the supreme object of life to be attained, is thus described as Bhagavata-Shesatva and a kritakritya who has entrusted the burden of his protection to the Lord, will lead his life devoted to the service of the Lord and his devotees.

He lives a life of self abnegation which will be a graceful gift granted to him by the Lord, and he considers that all this will be only for the pleasure of the Lord.

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CHAPTER – XVII

Shastriya Niyamanadhikara

It was said in the previous section that a Prapanna would abide by the Shastras that ordain certain duties. But, a number of doubts arise in this behalf. The Prapanna is not required to do the (duties of the) nitya and naimitthika karmas as an accessory to Bhakti-Yoga or Praptti, as he has performed what ought to be done and is similar to a Mukta. He does not need the direction of the Shastras, as he is required to do 'svayam-prayojana-kainkarya', loving service to the Lord and the devotees of the Lord, as svayam prayojana. Statements like 'कृतकृत्यः सुखी भवेत्', 'अनुष्ठित शतक्रतुः' declare that a Prapanna has no duties to perform. The Sruti and the Smrithi are certainly binding on those who are not Prapannas. 'आत्मनः तुष्टिरेव च' 'स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः' and other such authorities support this view. The great Bhashyakara also has not mentioned the performance of the pancha-maha-yajnas and others as post-prapatti duties amongst the others such as the study and propagation of Sri Bhashya and others. All these doubts are dispelled in this section.

The Introductory verse sums up the subject matter of this section.

मुकुन्दे निक्षिप्य स्वभरमनघो मुक्तवदसौ
स्वतन्त्राज्ञासिद्धां स्वयमविदितस्वामिहृदयः
परित्यागे सद्यस्स्वपरविविधानर्थजननात्
अलंघ्यां आमोक्षादनुसरति शास्त्रीय सरणिम् ॥

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"Having placed the burden of his protection on the Lord Mukunda he is just like a liberated one. He cannot know directly the intention of the Lord as he is yet embodied. In abandoning the path of the shastras, that is of the form of the commandment of the Supreme Lord he will be causing many hazards to himself as well as others and so he will obey the dictates of the shastras till he is liberated."

This Prapannadhikari who is associated with a body commenced on account of his prarabdha karmas and belonging to a particular varna and asrama, subjected to the performance of the respective duties, is verily like a liberated one, though contacting that body. Having entrusted the burden of his protection to the Lord, he is similar to a liberated one. He is to devote himself to the service of the Lord. As he is yet with the body, he cannot know the will of the Lord directly, and so has to know his intention only from the shastras. If he gives up the duties of his station in life, he will be causing 'अनर्थ' to himself and others.

The untoward that happens to him, will be of the form of punishments meted out by the Lord, as pointed out in 'अन्धा भवन्ति' , 'काणा भवन्ति' etc. Others follow his behaviour and he will be causing great disturbance that way. So, a prapanna who continues here with the body with which he is associated, follows as long as he is in this world, the command of the shastras. He will be deprived of the love of the Lord, if he transgresses his command.

एवं विलंघयन् मर्त्यो मर्यादां वेदनिर्मिताम् ।
प्रियोऽपि न प्रियोऽसौ मे मदाज्ञाव्यतिवर्तनात् ॥'

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"A man who transgresses the command of the shastra though dear to me will not become dear on account of going against the shastra".

Though he is a Kritakritya, though he is pure and sinless, though he is steadfast in his essential nature bereft of the limitations of varna and asrama, yet he is in contact with a body characterised by varna and asrama, and so he is obliged to abide by the canons of the shastra.

For a person, who is in this world, contacting prakriti which blindfolds one's understanding, the shastra alone is a beacon light, which shows the right path to be tread by him, and so he is to be necessarily guided by the shastra. Wherever an option is given by the shastra, he can choose a path according to his intention.

Sri Desika quotes an episode here. At the time of Sri Bhashyakar's departure from the body, the disciples were very much dejected and thought of following their preceptor by giving up their bodies. Seeing this, Sri Ramanuja said that those who ventured to give up their lives on his account, would not have any relationship with him and swore on the sacred feet of Sri Yamuna. When they said what they could do here in this world, Ramanuja, is said to have advised them thus:–

When a person has surrendered himself and the burden of his protection unto the Lord, he should realise that he has nothing to do in respect of his 'Atma-Yathra', as that depends upon the Lord. If he thinks, he has also something to do in that respect, the surrender of himself becomes a myth and unreal. His day to day life, so long as he is here, is

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regulated by his past-karmas and he has nothing to worry about that. If he worries, he will be a nastika or a disbeliever of the shastras. Thus, though he has severed his responsibility with the means of attainment of Godhead, he has to engage himself with acts of divine service which is the ultimate object of his attainment.

Sri Ramanuja has outlined the five-fold kainkarya that he can do here, so long as he is placed in this world, as follows:–

1. To study and propagate Sri Bhashyam.
2. If he is unable to do so, he may study the soul-stirring hymns of the Alwars, who were immersed in intense divine experience and propagate them.
3. If one cannot do that also, he may serve the Lord, who is ever showing himself in the Holy places by raising flower gardens for worship of the Lord or lighting lamps, or offering articles of worship and such divine services.
4. If one cannot do this also, he may recite always the 'Dvaya-mantra' reflecting upon its meanings.
5. Even if this also is not possible, he may take shelter under the benign grace of a Sreevaishnava, having deep devotion towards him.

If one is capable, one is urged to follow all these modes of divine service and spend one's time here with constant awareness of the Supreme Paramatman. Such a person, will be gratified on account of the supreme joy and satisfaction he derives from these noble services.

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A Prapanna has to behave carefully in this world, as related to three classes of people with whom he comes into contact. They are people who are 'Anukula' (favourable); 'Pratikula' (unfavourable) or 'Udasina' (neutral) who are neither favourable or unfavourable. The favourable are those who are Srivaishnavas that are ardent devotees of the Lord. The haters of God, are the unfavourable ones. Those who are neither, are neutrals. One must feel enjoyed in the company of favourable ones as one rejoices to have fragrant flowers, sandalpaste and the cool moonlight. One should fear to be in the company of the unfavourable ones, as one fears a serpent and other poisonous creatures. Those who are neither of these, should be counted as a piece of straw. It is to be known that behaving otherwise with these people, is only on counts of 'artha' and 'kama'. The Lord will be displeased if the devotees of the Lord are humiliated and the haters of the Lord are venerated. The intention of the Lord is that one should not even on counts of 'artha' and 'kama' treat them otherwise than they are worthy.

Association with the ungodly people and non-believers will adversely affect the devotees of the Lord. So, one should never choose their company. This code of behaviour can be known only from the shastras and the different modes of service unto the Lord and the devotees of the Lord, should be performed only according to the shastras. That which is not in accordance with the shastra is declared to be 'asura' and so one should follow the commands of the shastra, which are verily the commands of the Lord.

अविप्लवाय धर्माणां पालनाय कुलस्य च ।
संग्रहाय च लोकस्य मर्यादा स्थापनाय च ॥

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प्रियाय मम विष्णोश्च देवदेवस्य शार्ङ्गिणः ।

मनीषी वैदिकाचारं मनसपि न लङ्घयेत् ॥

A wiseman should never transgress the code of conduct prescribed by the shastras, even mentally, for the following reasons:–

1. The codes of conduct should not get destroyed.
2. He should protect the prestige of his 'kula' or family.
3. He must give a proper lead to the people of the world.
4. He should establish a righteous order.
5. He must please the Lord Vishnu.

If there is any transgression, it displeases the Lord and if he does not pray for forgiveness, he will be subjected to some punishment or other, before he departs from the body. There cannot be a greater punishment to a devotee, a satvika, than losing the affection and love of the Lord. This kind of 'आज्ञातिलंघन' is an obstruction to the natural flow of love of the Lord and this is to be reflected in 'Namah' and 'Ma-shuchah' of the three mantras. This kind of compliance with the shastras will avert the obstructions for attainment of purushartha and wins the grace of the Lord.

आज्ञानुज्ञाविभागेव द्विधा शास्त्रीयपद्धतिः

निग्रहानुदयायाद्या परा तत्तत्फलाप्तये ॥

अनुज्ञया प्रवृत्तेऽपि क्रमकोपादि संभवे ।

आज्ञातिक्रमदोषस्स्यात् नियमोऽतो दुरत्ययः ॥

The code of the shastras is two-fold viz. (1) those that are commanded and (2) those that are permitted. The

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compliance of the former will avoid the wrath of the Lord. The latter is followed for obtaining the respective benefits. Even when one is engaging in the latter, he has to follow the code prescribed by the Shastra. If not followed, he will be displeasing the Lord. It is not obligatory for all to undertake the permitted karmas. One will not get those benefits, if they are not done. But, the commanded duties are to be performed to avoid the displeasure of the Lord, though they are not meant for obtaining some benefits.

So, it is ordained here that a Prapanna has to abide by the rules of the Shastra, so long as he is stationed in this world.

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CHAPTER - XVIII

Aparadhapariharadhikara

In this section, it is expounded that a Prapanna who commits some faults willingly, impelled by his past karmas or on account of certain spacial and temporal conditions or on account of his inadvertence, has to repent for his faults and pray forgiveness of the Lord, failing which, he would be subjected to some punishments by the Lord. A Prapanna is, therefore, warned to be very careful regarding his behaviour in this world, where he is destined to live till he is liberated from the body. It is also pointed out that one who has surrendered the burden of his protection to the Lord, is sure to obtain his desired object viz., attainment of Godhead, culminating in loving eternal service to the Lord, after being thus purified.

In the introductory verse it is pointed out that even after attaining the purifying Ganga of the form of compassion of Sri Madhava, which is opposed to all that is defiling, most enjoyable, the purifier of all sins, the means of attainment of all desired objects, if one becomes tainted with sins, the virtuous will not be associate with him.

स्वच्छस्वादुसदावदातसुभगां दैवादयं देहभृत्
मालिन्यप्रशमाय माधवदयामन्दाकिनीं विन्दति
यद्यप्येवमसौ असारविषयस्रोतप्रसूतैः पुनः
पङ्कैरेव कलंकयन् निजतनुं प्राज्ञैः न संश्लिष्यते ।

When a person has attained the mercy of the Lord, on account of his total surrender unto Him, normally he will

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not transgress the command of the Lord, and will not indulge in petty means for attainment of worldly benefits; but, yet on account of his prarabdha-karma, if he were to indulge in unbecoming things, he will not be contacted by wise people. Offences that are done intentionally, do not happen, as a general case in such people, who have realised their subservience to the Lord, and who are taking delight in the service of the Lord, according to the shastras. If some sins happen to him on account of prarabdha-karma, without his intention, they will not taint him, as in the case of an 'upasaka'. If sins happen to him, being done intentionally, he has to perform an expiation for becoming free from that offence, and the expiation here, is to surrender unto the Lord again for the purpose of forgiving his offence. This 'prayaschitta' or expiation is not for gaining moksha, because that has been done already and the burden of his protection, has already been taken over by the Lord. It is ordained in the shastras that when a Prapanna happens to commit some offence, he should pray for excuse in the form of another surrender unto the Lord. If a Prapanna adopts some other 'upaya', like karma-yoga or bhakti-yoga willingly after having surrendered for moksha, even then he has to perform an expiation of the form of surrender for excusing that offence. He must feel repentance and shame for having committed the fault intentionally.

अपायसंप्लवे सद्यः प्रायश्चित्तः समाचरेत् ।
प्रायश्चित्तिरियं सात्र यत्पुनः शरणं व्रजेत् ॥
उपायानामुपायत्वस्वीकारेप्येतदेवहि ॥

This additional Prapatti is not for the purpose of attaining moksha but only for forgiving the fault committed

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intentionally. What happens if one commits an offence intentionally and does not perform this expiation? Mild punishment, similar to the punishment given to the princes and others will be meted out by the Lord and they will be purified and then taken over to his side. Just like an offence that is to be cleared by striking with a weapon, is got over by the pricking of a thorn. The serious offence that is willingly done, and not prayed for forgiveness, will be cleared by the Lord, by making them suffer in this world in various ways, before they pass out of the body purified to reach His eternal abode. All this happens on account of the grace of the Lord, who never forsakes one who has surrendered unto Him. It is, therefore, necessary to be very careful regarding one's course of life here after prapatti, and be vigilant not to commit any offence intentionally. If some offence occurs on account of past karmas, in spite of one's vigilance, it is wise to feel shame, repent, desist from such action further and to perform a prapatti, a second prapatti for forgiving that offence.

Sometime, it is asked whether one can perform a 'prayaschitta-prapatti' even before the offences occur, so that the Lord may not punish one, for such commissions. The answer to this question is that performing an expiation or prayaschitta, does not arise when the offence is not actually committed. In view of some offences that are anticipated in future, one cannot perform an expiation. But, at the time of performing prapatti for moksha, one may include in that prapatti itself, that he may be granted 'Niraparadha Kainkarya' i.e., a course of life after prapatti, where no offences occur. If a prayer for service to the Lord not tainted with offences is included in the prayer for protection of his

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self at the time of self-surrender, he will not be liable to commit the offences intentionally.

It is sometime argued that one need not seek for any forgiveness of the Lord, even in the case of intentional offences that are committed by one, as the Lord has given an assurance 'सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि' । It is also said that the Lord may not punish one even in case of intentional sins done by one. Some say that there would be no delay in attainment of godhead and eternal service of the Lord for those who cannot bear delay.

Vedanta Desika says that all these different propositions are made for extolling the auspicious qualities of the Lord and the greatness of Prapatti. But, these are all contrary to the practices of the ancient seers, who surrendered unto the Lord, and to the shastras that ordain expiations for getting rid of the bad effects of intentional offences and to the Shastras that point out that there will be delay in attaining the final fruit of Prapatti viz., attainment of Paramatman, in respect of those who have committed intentional sins and have not performed the expiations. The statement 'सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि' is a general assurance; but, it does not clear the offences done intentionally, because, there is a particular reference in respect of surrendering again as an expiation for intentional sins as 'प्रायश्चित्तिरियं सात्र यत्पुनः शरणं व्रजेत्' ।

This is an expiation which occurs after Prapatti. It cannot be said that this second surrender prescribes the removal of intentional sins done after Prapatti, in the case of those who have not done prapatti earlier for बुद्धिपूर्वोत्तराघ also, because, there is no authority that prescribes that one

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can perform a surrender earlier even for intentional sins that may occur after Prapatti. If the statement that the surrender that is made to the Lord is enough to remove the intentional sins also done after Prapatti, there will be no scope at all for the statement prescribing a second Prapatti. Then, according to the same analogy, the intentional sins that are done by an upasaka also will have to be taken as ineffective. But, the Brahmasutras have expressly mentioned that the past accumulated sins will vanish and the sins that occur unintentionally afterwards will not taint one. So, the shastra that enjoins a second Prapatti, is valid and the general statement 'सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि' does not cover the intentional sins done after Prapatti.

If it is asked then, how a light punishment will be given for intentional offences done after Praptti, it is answered that the infliction of punishment differs from person to person on counts of his caste, his qualities and the 'ashrama' or state of life. The heavy punishment that is given to an offender will not be given to a prince. He will be punished lightly and that would be enough to reform him. The Lord favours a Prapanna, and never deprives him of the main object of his prayer viz. liberation from samsara. But, sets him right, when he approaches Him with repentance for forgiveness. 'लघुर्दण्डः प्रपन्नस्य राजपुत्रापराधवत्' ।

For giving a proper lead to the people of the world, people who are celebrated are also punished lightly when they commit offences. It cannot be asked whether one can perform a Prapatti for excusing the sins that are done intentionally after Prapatti, just as the question of performing upasana for the faults that are done intentionally after commencing upasana does not arise. Unless an occasion

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actually arises, there cannot be a remedy. It is said 'कृते पापे अनुतापः'. The 'naimittika' or surrender for a particular cause, does not come upon one, without the 'nimitta' or the cause for that. But, if one fears that intentional sins may happen to him after his Prapatti, it is proper that he should perform a 'prayaschitta' of the form of Prapatti for averting the effects of the prarabdha-karma that has already become operative. It is mentioned in the shastras that a part of the prarabdha-karma, can be annihilated by means of dana, japa and others, as mentioned in the following verse:–

जन्मान्तरकृतं पापं व्याधिरूपेण बाधते ।

तच्छान्तिः औषधैर्दानैः जपहोमार्चनादिभिः ॥

So, it is established that 'buddhipoorvaka papa' or committing sins intentionally after Prapatti, does not arise, if one performs a Prapatti for 'पापारम्भकपापं' or the sins that are liable to cause one do sins.

Desika points out that even slight sins done against the satvikas will have its own adverse effects and so one should be very careful and avoid any kind of offences after Prapatti, so that he may not be deprived of the grace of the Lord and he may not be subjected to even light punishment.

The main cause of all such offences happens to be non-discrimination or 'aviveka'. One should steer clear of the body-soul illusion, and the illusion that he is not dependent upon the Ishvara, and that he has all powers.

The cause of clearing all this illusion, will be a right understanding of his true nature. It is declared by savants that by the termination of the cause of offences viz., body-

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soul illusion and the illusion that he alone is an independent entity by himself; all offences that arise on account of 'artha' and 'kama', will be uprooted without any further effort. The intentional sins are on account of 'artha' and 'kama'. They get destroyed, when one realises his true nature of being subservient to the Lord.

अविवेकप्रभुत्वादेर्निदानस्य निवर्तनात् ।

अर्थकामापचाराणां अयत्नोन्मूलनं भवेत् ॥

Of all the offences, offences towards the Bhagavatas, are very serious ones and one should be very vigilant to avoid offences towards the godly-ones. Bhagavan Ramanuja has expounded under the Vedanta Sutra 3-4-42 'एवं मुक्तफलानियमः तदवस्थावधृतेः', that the result of moksha will be delayed on account of the offence of Bhagavathapachara. It is ordained in the shastras that a Bhagavatha should be venerated in spite of all differences of caste.

यः शूद्रं भगवद्भक्तं निषादं श्वपचं तथा ।

वीक्षते जातिसामान्यात् स यातिनरकं नरः ॥

"A devotee of the Lord, who may be a 'sudra' or a forester or a low caste man should not be treated on counts of caste. If one does so, he will fall into hell" –

तस्माद्विष्णुप्रसादाय वैष्णवान् परितोषयेत् ।

प्रसादसुमुखो विष्णुः तेनैव स्यान्नसंशयः ॥

"For winning the grace of the Lord, one should please the devotees of the Lord Vishnu. By this alone, the Lord becomes pleased. There is no doubt about it."

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When a Bhagavatha is offended by a person, it is necessary that he should beg pardon of that Bhagavatha for having committed that offence. The instance of Lakshmana and Sugriva praying for excuse mutually when Lakshmana was harsh on Sugriva for having delayed to meet Rama, is quoted by the Acharyas to illustrate this point.

It is the understanding of the shastras that the Lord is going to excuse such sins that occur even intentionally, when one surrenders unto Him with a prayer to excuse his faults. So, it is decided in this section that the Lord who is ever compassionate, will pardon such Prapannas who have consciously committed offences, when they pray for pardon by practising a second Prapatti. By his surrender for liberation, all the accumulated sins will be terminated by the Lord. The sins that occur inadvertently will not stick to him. The lord is sure to grant him moksha for his first and primary Prapatti itself. It will never fail. If such a Prapanna does not repent and pray for pardon with a second Prapatti, even in that case, the Lord will not deprive him of the fruit of his first Prapatti, but inflicts on him punishment and thus, purifying him, takes him to His side. Such is the greatness of Prapatti and consequently, the greatness of the compassion of the Supreme Lord. This is pointed out in the concluding verse –

प्रारब्धेतरपूर्वपापमखिलं प्रामादिकं चोत्तरं
न्यासेन क्षपयत्रवभ्युपगतप्रारब्धखण्डं चनः ।
धीपूर्वोत्तर पाप्मनामजननात् जातेऽपि तन्निष्कृतेः ।
कौटिल्ये सति शिक्षयाप्यनघयन् क्रोढीकरोति प्रभुः ॥

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CHAPTER - XIX

Sthana Visheshadhikara

It was expounded in the previous section viz., Aparadhapariharadhikara, that a Prapanna should engage himself in divine service to the Lord, untainted by any offence, so long as he is destined to live in this world. He would gain the eternal service of the Lord in the Supreme Abode of the Lord after casting his body. It is described in this section, whether a suitable place is available for such a person to live in and to spend his lifetime in activities that are free from offences. Where should such a Prapanna spend the rest of his life, as most of the places mentioned by the ancient sages, have all been contaminated by worldly people and are not fit for a Prapanna to lead a calm and undisturbed life?

The sages of yore recommended places like shores of the Ganges, Prayag, Pushkara and Naimisharanya, and such holy places, as suitable for an ardent devotee to live. They did so because, those holy places were likely to have in them sages and realisers of Paramatman. But, on account of the ravages of time such as Kali-Yuga, and the deterioration in following the eternal dharmas, all those places have become unsuitable for the Prapanna to live.

Considering all these factors, Vedanta Desika suggests that a Prapanna may live in any place which is helpful for gaining tranquility of the mind and for developing single-minded devotion towards the Lord and to obtain the association of an ardent lover of God, who is a 'Paramaikantin'.

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'यत्रैकाग्र्यं भवति भगवत्पादसेवार्चनादेः
यत्रैकान्त्यव्यवसितधियो यस्य कस्यापि लाभः ।
वासस्थानं तदिह कृतिनां भाति वैकुण्ठकल्पं'।

In the introductory verse, Desika says that "a place where concentration of mind for worship of the Lord and meditation upon the Lord, become possible", where one gains the company of a devotee who is free from contact with other deities, and other benefits, would be equivalent to 'Vaikuntha', the eternal abode of the Lord. The places suggested by the sages, such as Naimisha, Badari and bank of Ganga, and other similar holy places were suggested perhaps on account of the possibility of the presence of single-minded Bhagavatas. As the Holy places such as Aryavartha and others, have become unsuitable on account of the expeditions of non-believers of God, one should choose a place where some ardent devotees of the Lord are present.

It cannot be said that there will be no Bhagavatas at all, in the Kali-Yuga, as the sages have declared that even in the Kali-Yuga, there will be eminent bhagavathas here and there –

कलौ खलु भविष्यन्ति नारायणपरायणाः ।
क्वचित्क्वचिन्महाभागाः द्राविडेषु च भूरिशः ॥

So, it may be known that dharma of the nature of sole devotion to the Lord will never be obliterated on account of the presence of Bhagavatas at all times. In the Moksha Dharma of the Mahabharata, it is mentioned that when gods and sages requested the Lord to suggest a suitable place for them to live, the compassionate Lord replied thus –

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गुरवो यत्र पूज्यन्ते साधुवृत्ताः शमान्विताः ।
वस्तव्यं तत्र युष्माभिः यत्र धर्मो न हीयते ॥
यत्र वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च तपस्सत्यं दमस्तथा ।
स वै देशो हि वस्सेव्यो मा वोऽधर्मः पदा स्पृशेत् ॥

A place where preceptors are venerated and where on account of the presence of such devotees, Dharma prospers; in a place, where the rites prescribed by the Vedas and the courses of penance, the word of truth, conquest over the senses, prevail, that is to be resorted, and adharma will not even creep into those places.

A place where there are facilities for rendering selfless service to the Lord and such Holy places, are recommended for a Prapanna to live. The Holy places where the Supreme Paramatman dwells is a right place for a Prapanna to live. The statement found in the Sharanagati Gadya viz., "till the fall of your body, you can live peacefully in Srirangam alone", does not exclude other Holy places, where the Lord is eternally present. This statement is only indicative of other Holy places also. The dwelling place for a discriminating person is surely a holy place where the Lord is showing Himself. It is said in Mahabharata,

यत्र नारायणोदेवः परमात्मा सनातनः ।
तत्पुण्यं तत्परंब्रह्म तत्तीर्थं तत्तपोवनम् ॥
तत्र देवर्षयः सिद्धाः सर्वे चैव तपोधनाः ॥

"The place where that Supreme Paramatman is present that is punya, that is a holy place, that is verily a hermitage. The Deva Rishis, Siddhas and all hermits engaged in penance are all there".

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In the 'Agamas', it is pointed out that the Holy places are of different types such as 'svayam-vyakta', installed by siddapurushas, and installed by Vaisnavas, and that an ardent devotee may live in such Holy places doing whatever divine services he could. It is declared in the Shastras that a person who breathes his last in a Holy place, becomes purified of all impurities and gradually attains the eternal abode of the Lord.

Mere dwelling in a Holy place, will not be the cause of emancipation. It helps him to strengthen his faith in the Lord, and adopt a means of salvation such as Bhakti Yoga or Prapatti, through which he may attain the Supreme Paramatman. It is declared –

यत्किञ्चिदपि कुर्वाणो विष्णोरायतने वसेत् ।
न किञ्चिदपि कुर्वाणो विष्णोरायतने वसेत् ॥'

The idea of this verse is, "he must dwell in the Holy place of the Lord, doing any kind of ordained service to the Lord, be it by his body or mind or speech. This points out that he must engage while living there in some divine service or other as approved by the scriptures. 'Not doing anything' means not indulging in any kind of prohibited deed and dis-service to the Lord and the Godly-ones".

Desika ordains that a Prapanna lives in a place where there are Bhagavatas and where there is a possibility of enhancing one's 'satvic' nature. He points out that the verse –

निगृहीतेन्द्रियग्रामः यत्र यत्र वसेन्नरः ।
तत्र तत्र कुरुक्षेत्रं नैमिषं पुष्करं तथा ॥

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i.e. "that place where a devotee who has restrained his sense organs lives, is verily Kurukshetra, Naimisharanya and Pushkara"; emphasises that the place, where a Bhagavata dwells, also become celebrated. This is to be followed, when there is no other go. This also affirms that there is no rule that a particular place is necessary for discarding one's body. One may cast away his body anywhere, but he is sure to obtain the fruit of his Prapatti, wherever he breathes his last.

ज्ञानसमकालमुक्त्वा कैवल्यं याति गतशोकः ।

तीर्थे श्वपचगृहे वा नष्टस्मृतिरपि परित्यजन् देहम्।

"A person who utters the words of surrender and surrenders and gains the knowledge of Paramatman, may give up his body in a Holy place or in the place of an out caste or in a state of unconsciousness, but he surely attains liberation getting rid of all sorrows". This statement is meant for emphasising the fact that the surrender performed by one will never become futile and this does not in anyway discard the principle that was stated for living in a place conducive to one's devotional activities.

Vedanta Desika concludes that a place like Kashi (or Benares) or Ayodhya or Avanthi or Kanchipuram or Madhura or any other Holy place, will not, merely of themselves, become celebrated, if those places are not desired by Bhagavatas who are intent upon drinking the nectar of the Holy names and exploits of the Lord. The intention is that any Holy place which is not relished by Bhagavatas, does not appeal to a Prapanna and on the contrary, any place that is relished by ardent devotees, becomes a coveted place for a Prapanna to live.

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सा काशीति न चाकशीति भुविसायोध्येति नाध्यास्यते
सावन्तीति न कल्मषादवतिसा काञ्चीति नोदञ्चति ।
धत्ते सामधुरेति नोत्तमधुरां नान्यापि मान्या पुरी
या वैकुण्ठकथा सुधारस भुजां रोचेत नो चेतसे ॥

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CHAPTER - XX

Niryandhikara

The process of the jivas passing out of the body, has been described in the Upanishads and the same has been expounded in the Brahmasutras (second quarter of the fourth chapter). In Chandogya Upanishad, it is said that when the 'purusha' dies, his speech unites with mind, the mind gets into prana and the prana into tejas and the tejas becomes one with Supreme Deity (Chandogya 6-8-6). The Chandogya Upanishad describes the passage of the released atman to reach Paramatman. There, it is pointed out that the knowers of Brahman, reach fire or 'Agni', the first in the path of 'Archiradi'. From fire to the deity of the day, from him to the deity of shukla-paksha, from him to the deity of uttarayana and then to samvathsara. From the deity of samvathsara, to the sun, from him to the moon and from him to the vidyuth or the deity of lightning. From vidyuth, the Amanava Purusha will unite him with Brahman. It is said that those who go by this path, never any more return to this world of Humans (Chandogya 4-15-5 and 4-15-6). This process of 'uthkranthi' and the path by which a meditator upon Brahman, attains Brahman, is described vividly in the Brahmasutras in the second pada and third pada of the fourth chapter.

What has been described thus in respect of the Brahmopasakas regarding 'niryana' or 'uthkranti' and 'archiradi-gati' or the path beginning with 'Agni' that leads to Brahman, applies equally to the Prapannas, who have

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totally surrendered the burden of their protection to the Lord.

Vedanta Desika describes in two sections viz., Niryanadhikara and Gatichintanadhikara, the mode of passing out of the body and journey to Supreme Brahman through the path of 'Archiradi'.

In Niryanadhikara i.e., the section describing the process of passing out of the body, Desika describes how a Prapanna passes out of the body, after becoming pure by exhausting the prarabdha-karmas that had come upon him in that body at such a time that he decides to quit this body. In the introductory verse, this process of passing out of the body, has been summarized in a nutshell.

'मनसि करणग्रामं प्राणे मनः पुरुषे च तं
झटिति घटयन् भूतेष्वेनं परे च तमात्मनि ।
स्वविदविदुषोरित्थं साधारणे सरणेर्मुखैः
नयति परतो नाडीभेदैर्यथोचितमीश्वरः ॥

At the time of Niryana or the jivatma's passing out of the body, all the ten indriyas unite with the mind, and that mind unites with the prana, and that prana in which the mind and others are united, unite with the jivatman and that jivatman is united with the subtle elements and then this jivatman unites with the Paramatman, who is the inner controller in the heart. Like this, both the persons – one that has knowledge of Brahman and another that does not have knowledge of Brahman – pass out of the body in the same way. But, the Lord leads the knower of Brahman i.e., the Prapanna through the path of 'archiradi' and the other one through the path of 'Dhuma', according to their differences.

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When a person surrenders unto the Lord, the Lord holds him by his hand and wills to take him to his side; but, on account of some prarabdha-karmas, the Prapanna may be affected by 'ahankara' and 'mamakara' or commit some offences or may desire for some other benefits, on account of which, he may be associated with some other deity, or their faith may be disturbed a little, and they may think of some other means and on account of these 'niryana' or 'uthkranti' may be delayed. But, on the other hand, those who have surrendered unto the Lord, including the fact of non-occurrence of offences during the post-prapatti-period, and who have unshakable faith, and who never feel 'ahankara' or 'mamakara' and who guard themselves from all kinds of intentional sins, the 'niryana' will be at a time that is desired by such aspirants.

If one surrenders unto the Lord, without specifying the time of his departure from this world, he attains the Lord with some delay, after annihilating all sins that have happened to him. Such a person will not cherish to have other objects of life, as he is a 'mumukshu'. If a Prapanna has 'prayojananthara - ruchi' a taste for other benefits also along with 'moksha-ruchi', the Lord who is a well-wisher does not grant him other benefits and he will treat with indifference those desires and he enlightens him on the true nature of such other attainments such as 'alpatva', 'asthiratva', 'dukhamisratva' etc., or He will see that, that person becomes dejected in the experience of certain ungodly benefits and he will see that such a person becomes averse to other benefits within the time that he had intended for deliverance at the time of Prapatti. It is pointed out in the verse below:

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अथोपायप्रसक्तोऽपि भुक्त्वा भोगाननामयान् ।
अन्ते विरक्तिमासाद्य विशते वैष्णवं पदम् ॥

The delay for attainment of Godhead, is only so long as he has not gained dispassion or 'vairagya'.

If a Prapanna contacts other deities with devotion, what happens to him? The Lord will see that he feels ashamed of getting devatantara-sparsa some day or other or by some means or other, and overcome that defect in him. Desika points out that if 'devatantara-sparsa' becomes steadfast in him, it should be understood that he is not having the 'mokshopaya-sparsa'. For such people 'naraka' and others do certainly happen. If it is asked whether there is no benefit for the means adopted by him before, it is said that the act that is done as regards the Lord, by some way or other, is surely going to fulfil one day or other, the proper performance of the means and becomes fulfilled. What he has done in respect of the Lord does not go a waste. It is a 'sukrut-lesa' and it completes the performance of the means some day or other.

For those, who have surrendered unto the Lord with perfect faith, weakness of mind (budhi-dourbalya) or desire for some other means will never arise. If these arise, it can be understood that their faith was faint. The Lord who is compassionate, will correct even such people and make them have supreme faith and convert them into those who have 'poorna-prapatti'.

For a person, who is free from all these perverse temperaments, there will be no doubt of delay in attaining liberation. The delay is, only according to their wishes.

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Suppose, a person has surrendered desirous of 'moksha' at the time of the fall of that body, he is sure to get moksha at the time of the fall of that body.

When a person has surrendered the burden of his protection to the Lord and after that on account of his prarabdha-karma, if he develops interest in worldly objects, the Lord – who is a well-wisher – will not be granting those little benefits, even though prayed for them. The Lord will see that whatever the aspirant has sincerely done in respect of the Lord, will never go wasted, but it will become fully effective and successful in some future time and the means of surrender will be fully accomplished. The Supreme Paramatman who is all independent, and the 'sheshin' of all others, other than himself, will certainly will the annihilation of the accumulated sins, and the non-tainting of sins done inadvertently after prapatti, at the very moment of the utterance of the statement of surrender unto the Lord. He wills to take the Prapanna and his associates to his eternal abode at the time that is desired by the Prapnna viz., at the termination of that body.

For those sins that were intentionally done by a Prapanna after his prapatti, the Lord wills to destroy them by making that Prapanna repent for his sins and to pray for pardon of the Lord for doing such sins. If he does not pray for pardon, which will be of the form of second prapatti for excusing those sins, the Lord will purify him by inflicting suitable punishment to him. But, He will never deprive the Prapanna of the supreme benefit of attaining moksha. All his 'sukruta' and 'dushkruta' will be completely divested of a Prapanna, at the time of his death, and they will be transmitted to his friends and foes.

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'प्रियेषु स्वेषु सुकृतमप्रियेषु च दुष्कृतम् ।
विसृज्य ध्यानयोगेन ब्रह्माप्येति सनातनम् ।

This statement that an upasaka gets rid of his sins, applies equally in the case of a Prapanna also, and a Prapanna becomes freed from all karmas at the time of the fall of his body itself. This question has been discussed in the Brahmasutras and it is decided there that the Bhakti-yogi becomes freed from both kinds of good and bad karmas and proceeds on the path of 'archiradi' to attain the Supreme Paramatman. The upasaka or the Prapanna will get a subtle body not due to karma, but on account of the efficacy of the 'upasana' or 'prapatti', for moving on through the path of 'archiradi'.

The statement of the Smritis that the day time, the bright half of the month and the 'uttarayana' are celebrated periods for departing from the body, does not relate to a Prapanna or a Bhakti-yogi. It is verily pointed out that the death may occur at any time in any place, but a Prapanna is sure to attain his goal.

ज्ञानसमकालमुक्त्वा कैवल्यं याति गतशोकः ।
तीर्थे श्वपचगृहे वा नष्टस्मृतिरपि परित्यजन् देहम् ॥

Having uttered the statement of surrender as soon as getting knowledge of the Supreme Paramatman, a Prapanna attains moksha bereft of all sorrows by casting away his body in a Holy Place or in the household of an out caste or in a state of unconsciousness. At the time of passing out of the body, all the ten indriyas unite with the mind, and that mind unites with the vital airs and that prana-vayu along with others already united, unites with the jivatman, united with

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the five subtle elements and he will be churned out of the body, and he will proceed out of the body through the 'nadis'. This process of the jivatman passing out of the body is common to both the knower of Brahman and non-knower of Brahman. At that stage, there will be a significant change in the passage of the atman, who is a Prapanna. A Prapanna will be led by the well-wisher, the Supreme Paramatman to enter into the 'moordhanya-nadi' and he will come out of the body to go on the path of 'archiradi'. The Prapnna and others part ways at the time of the entrance into 'moordhanya-nadi'. Being blessed by the Supreme Paramatman, the Prapanna and the Bhakti-yogin enter the 'moordhanya-nadi' to reach through it, the path of 'archiardi'.

Desika discusses in this connection the propriety of having 'antima-smriti' or final remembrance of the Lord. In the verse quoted above, where the case of a person, who is unconscious (nasta-smriti) is mentioned. Similarly, there is a statement 'स्थिते मनसि सुस्वस्थे' which affirms, that in the case of a person, who remembers the Lord when his mind and body are sound, the Lord would never forsake him, but remember him when he has gone unconscious, just like a log of wood. He would remember his devotee and would lead him to his supreme abode. The great Bhashyakara has said in his 'Gadya' that a Prapanna would have a vivid vision of the Lord, his poorva-samskara being never lost and that he would be led to the Supreme Abode by the compassion itself of the Lord –

'केवलेन, मदीययैव दयया अतिप्रबुद्धः मामेव अवलोकयन्'।

Desika points out all these statements should be reconciled and explained harmoniously as follows: –

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As mentioned in 'Sharanagati-Gadya', the final remembrance of the Lord, will certainly come to a Prapanna, who has performed prapatti for attainment of moksha. The 'antima-smriti' is not a kind of 'upaya', which is possible of one's own effort, as pointed out in statements like –

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं or यं योगिनो प्राणवियोगकाले यत्नेन चित्ते विनिवेशयन्ति ।

But, it is the remembrance of the Lord that arises in the mind of a person which has not yet merged with vital airs, but in which, all the ten indriyas are united. This is not possible of knowing by those who are by the side of the dying person. It is pointed out in the Bhashya as follows:–

दृश्यते हि वागिन्द्रिये उपरतेऽपि मनः प्रवृत्तिः।

So, it is to be concluded that the final remembrance of the Lord is known to those that are becoming liberated and to the Ishvara who grants that final remembrance of Him.

After the merging of the subtle prana with the jivatman who is united with the subtle elements, the jivatman unites with Paramatman, who is in his heart and after taking rest there, the Prapanna and Bhakti-yogi go through the 'sushumna-nadi' leading to 'archiradi'. Till the time of entry into 'sushumna-nadi' which is caused by the compassionate Paramatman, he will be in a state, which is similar to 'sushupti'. Being awakened by the Lord, the Prapanna enters into the 'sushumna-nadi' which is made to illumine by the Lord himself. For others, who are not 'upasakas' or 'Prapannas', they pass out of the body through other nerves, and attain the destined places further. From the moment of

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entry into the 'sushumna-nadi', the jivatman becomes endowed with perfect knowledge and there will be only one day for all time to come. This has been explained as सकृत् दिवाहैव अस्य भवति' ।

Thus, in this chapter, the passage of the jivatman from the body, is described till he enters into the 'sushumna-nadi'. His attainment of Paramatman through the Archiradi path is described in the next chapter, the 'Gatichintanadhikara'.

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CHAPTER - XXI

Gatichintanadhikara

The Upanishads describe the path of 'archiradi' and calls it 'Devapatha' or 'Brahmapatha'. The various guides lead jivatman from one place to another place and a superhuman called 'Amanava', leads him to Supreme Brahman in the end. As a king fondles his son, the prince, who is obedient to him, the Lord himself makes this liberated soul led to his place by the various 'ativahikas' such as Agni and others. The 'athivahikas' are as follows: -

Agni the deity of the day, the deity of the bright half of the month, the deity of uttarayana, the deity of the year or samvatsara, Vayu, Aditya, the moon, the Vaidyutapurusha, Varuna, Indra and Prajapathi.

ज्वलनदिवसज्योत्स्ना पक्षोत्तरायणवत्सरान्
पवन तपन प्रालेयांशून् क्रमादचिरद्युतिम् ।
जलधरपतिं देवाधीशं प्रजापतिमागतः
तरति विरजां दूरे वाचस्ततः परमद्भुतम् ॥

The liberated soul is respectfully led by these guides or 'athivahikas', and he attains the Eternal Abode of Paramatman. He will be endowed with a subtle body that is meant for only movement on the path of 'archiradi', by virtue of his prapatti or upasana, and he casts away that subtle body while reaching the divine river 'Viraja'. Crossing the river 'Viraja', he is endowed with a non-material body i.e., Aprakrita-Sharira. He will be then led to the lake

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ऐरम्मदीय and the peepal tree called सोमसवन and he is welcomed by five hundred divine damsels, and he will be decorated with 'Brahmalankara'. The Kaushitaki Upanishad describes graphically the glory of the 'mukta'. The deities Indra, Varuna and Prajapati, will be congratulating the liberated soul with great veneration. The liberated soul witnesses the Supreme Lord in his Supreme Abode. By thus attaining the Lord, in his abode, the liberated atman manifests its true nature of infinite consciousness and the eight divine qualities, and for all the time to come, enjoys the bliss of divine communion. He will get rid of all obstacles and all limitations to the experience of the divine and will ever realise that he is inseparable from the Lord. The ecstasy of divine experience, overflows in the form of loving service of the Supreme Paramatman. It has been decided in the Brahmasutras that his essential nature of consciousness will be perfectly manifested at that time as well as his 'dharma-buta-jnanam' will be all expansive just like the 'dharma-buta-jnanam' of Paramatman. He will be deriving the Supreme joy of eternal communion with the Lord, for all time to come.

A Bhakti-yogin has to reflect upon this 'archiradi' path day-in and day-out, as it is an accessory to Bhakti-yoga. But, for a Prapanna, this reflection of the 'archiradi' path, is a source of great delight, though it is not an accessory to Prapatti. The Prapanna becomes gratified by thinking of this 'archiradi', and the divine experience, he is going to gain in course of time.

In the concluding verse of this chapter, Desika describes that the 'Harichandana' or sandal tree of the form of Lord Hari, would bless the souls that have surrendered unto Him,

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being tired of moving up and down by the paths leading to hell, and becoming completely exhausted on account of their unceasing movement, by taking them to his side, being led by his obedient servants, the 'athivahikas', the Lord would make them happy by granting his cool shade for all time to come.

As the tree provides its cool shade to the tired travellers, the Lord grants the Supreme Happiness of His Eternal Communion to those who had been unceasingly involved in the circle of births and deaths. The Lord will never will to send those liberated atmans to this world - 'न च पुनरावर्तते' say the Upanishads.

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CHAPTER - XXII

Paripurna Brahmanubhava Adhikara

In this section, Desika describes the great benefit of obtaining the bliss of communion with Paramatman for all time to come, and the unique gain of similarity or 'Paramasamya' with the Supreme Paramatman. In explaining this complete experience of the 'Sarveswara', the celebrated author is guided by the upanishadic statements, as well as the conclusions of the Brahmasutras, beginning with 'Karyadhikarana' (in the third pada of the fourth chapter) and concluding with the declaration of the Sutrakara with the sutra 'Anavritih Shabdat' (from Sutra 4-3-6 to 4-4-22).

According to the exposition of the Upanishads, as related to the liberated self and according to the conclusions that are arrived at by the Brahmasutrakara, Desika describes the state of 'mukti' as related to a Prapanna to be the same as that of an Upasaka of Brahman. The passage of the Prapanna through the 'archiradi' to the Supreme Abode of Paramatman, and the manifestation of the true nature of the individual self after attainment of the Supreme Paramatman, the eternal bliss of communion with the Lord, the fulfilment of the goal of attaining Paramatman – all these are similar to the attainment of the Brahma-Upasakas.

In the introductory stanza of this chapter, Desika describes all these factors. The Prapanna reaches the Supreme Abode of Paramatman through 'archiradi' and not 'Hiranyagarbha' or Karya-Brahma, as some schools posit. The abode of Paramatman is described as 'Vitamasi-Pade'

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which means that it is an abode of Suddha-satva' beyond the material world. The sruti says 'Tamasah-Parastat'. The Chandogya Upanishad and the Subala Upanishad, describe this abode picturesquely. The liberated Prapanna attains the Lord, characterised by infinite auspicious qualities and who is extolled by the celebrated 'Purusha-sukta' and who is the Lord of Goddess Mahalakshmi. Reaching the Lord, being led to his abode by the 'ativahikas', the liberated atman manifests his true nature of being characterised by eight qualities as pointed out in the Sutra 4.4.1 – 'Sampadya Avirbhavah Svena Shabdat'.

The liberated atman realises directly his nature of being an inseparable attribute to the Supreme Lord. He will be manifesting the eight qualities such as 'apahatapapma' and others, and he will be of the nature of consciousness or 'Jnana-svarupa' also. He will not become mere 'jnana-svarupa', but will also have the attribute of 'jnanam' - jnana-gunaka' as decided by the Sutrakara in Sutra 4-4-7. 'एवमप्युपन्यासात्पूर्वभावादविरोधं बादरायणः' । The view point of some, that the liberated will be mere consciousness, has been set aside by the Sutrakara. He will attain supreme similarity in his nature and attributes with Paramatman and, he will no more be returning to this world –

वितमसि पदे लक्ष्मीकान्तं विचित्रविभूतिकं
सचिवगमितः संपद्याविर्भवत्सहजाकृतिः ।
स्फुट तदपृथक्सिद्धिः सिद्ध्यद्गुणाष्टकतत्फलो
भजति परमं साम्यं भोगे निवृत्तिकथोज्झितम् ॥'

Desika explains the state of a liberated soul as follows–

1. The mukta or liberated atman experiences the Supreme

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Lord characterised by all his infinite forms, qualities, glories and functions in all places, at all times, in all states, without any exception. The experience is equal to him and the Supreme Paramatman, and that is mentioned by Sruti as 'Parama-Samya'. All the ills of samsara have vanished. "The attainment of Paramatman which is of the form of unequalled infinite happiness is the one terminal and sure remedy for all the ills of samsara" –

"निरस्तातिशयाह्लादसुखभावैकलक्षणा ।
भेषजं भागवत्प्राप्तिः एकान्तात्यन्तिकी मता" ॥

2. It may be asked, how are the other objects related to Paramatman, enjoyable to the mukta? The analogy of the queen and the king is given here. While the king is 'bhogya' to the anointed queen, all objects of enjoyment and instruments of enjoyment that are agreeable to the king, become enjoyable to the queen also. Similarly, all objects that are inherently related to the Paramatman, become equally enjoyable to the mukta also, to whom Bhagavan is a cherished object of enjoyment.

3. The Srutis and Smritis declare that the Supreme Paramatman is 'parama-bhogya' as characterised by all attributes. The Alwar says, "the lover does not leave enjoying the lotus eyed Paramatman, the Lord of the two vibhutis, even a little." That means, the mukta immerses himself in the bliss of communion with the Lord fully, and he does not miss Him even for a fraction of a second, while enjoying the Lord with all his glory. "He does not see any other thing, he does not hear any

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other thing, he does not know any other thing".

'यत्र नान्यत् पश्यति नान्यत् श्रृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा'

(छां.उ. 7-24-1)

4. The term Paramapada signifies the essential nature of Paramatman or 'Bhagavat-svarupa', as the attainment of Bhagavan is 'parama-prapya', as it is infinitely pleasing. Similarly, the particular abode where the mukta obtains 'paripoorna-anubhava' of bhagavat-svarupa', also becomes a cherished place, and most celebrated; so, the particular abode, where he obtains this unique divine experience is also designated as 'parama-pada'.

The essential nature of the mukta also is called as 'parama-pada', because he is the 'ashraya' or resort for that unique experience or Paramatman. The muktatman is the vibhuti of Bhagavan, and of the nature of consciousness and bliss, as he also is an object of experience as the 'ashraya' for divine experience; his essential nature is also called as 'parama-pada'. Thus, the term 'parama-pada' signifies all the three viz. Supreme Paramatman, the object of experience; the abode where that experience is gained and the muktatman who is the experiencer and the 'ashraya' of that experience.

This is in accordance with what Bhagavan Ramanuja says in Vedartha Sangraha –

क्वचित् परस्थानं च परमपदशब्देन प्रतिपाद्यते ।

क्वचित् प्रकृतिवियुक्तात्मस्वरूपम् । क्वचित् भागवत्स्वरूपम् ॥

It may be asked, how the objects in the mundane world, the 'lila-vibhuti' of the Lord, that are perceived directly as

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disagreeable, and that are ordained in the Shastras as things that are to be discarded, become 'bhogya' to a mukta? The answer to this question is, that even those objects that were disagreeable to him, while he was imprisoned in matter, become 'bhogya' to him, as the aspect of disagreeability has been terminated when he is liberated. Desika gives two examples here –

Milk which is agreeable to all, becomes dis-agreeable and distasteful to one, who is affected by bile. The same person finds milk agreeable to him, when the defect of the bile (pitta) is cured.

Another example is given by Desika for this. A prince who is put into the prison of the monarch, finds that the prison is disagreeable to him; but, when the king releases him from the prison and makes him experience happiness equal to him, the prince does not find the prison disagreeable. He considers it as a vibhuti of his father.

Similarly, when the atman is in this world, according to his past karma and when he is deprived of the communion of the Lord, he finds the objects of this world as totally disagreeable or slightly agreeable. But, all these objects of this 'lila-vibhuti' become included in the group of objects of immense joy, when he is liberated from this world, and when he is having incessant communion with the Lord. It is on account of the will of the Lord that the objects of this world are disagreeable (pratikula) or slightly agreeable (alpanukula) for those who are bound by karmas and they are ever agreeable to those who have got rid of the bondage of karma and who have gained Paramatman.

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The statement of the Sruti that whatever the 'Mukta' desires becomes actualised and that he will be sporting with damsels and others; and that he will be eating, drinking and seeing his forefathers and others, is to be understood that they are not the results of his karma (Karma Phala); but, they are actualised on account of his own desire, which will be in accordance with the desire of the Lord and so, they are all included in the stream of experience of pure kainkarya to the Lord – 'Kevala-Kainkarya' of the form of the stream of divine experience. So the 'Prapti' or attainment of Paramatman is to be understood as 'यथाभिमत कैंकर्यपर्यन्त-ब्रह्मानुभवः'।

i.e., complete experience of Brahman extending upto kainkarya, as desired.

When a person gains this ultimate object of divine experience once, it will not come to an end at any time. Various authorities like – 'प्राप्यते परमं धाम यतो नावर्तते यतिः'।

"The upasaka of Brahman attains that Supreme Abode from which he never more returns";

"Having attained me, the aspirant does not take birth again in this world of sorrow";

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते

"There will be no re-birth after attaining me."

यदा स केवलीभूतः षड्विंशं अनुपश्यति ।
तदा स सर्वसिद्धत्वात् पुनर्जन्म न विन्दति ॥

"When the mumukshu, getting rid of the contact with the matter, witnesses the Supreme Lord, the twenty sixth entity, he attains his true nature, and never more be born in this world again."

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The Alwar says, "Having uttered the holy Mulamantra with the mouth, and folding one's hands on the head with reverence, and if one goes to the abode of that Lord, He will not allow him to go back even on bail."

If at times, he enters into this world of 'samsara', at the behest of the Lord, and if he moves here at will, he will not be deprived of the bliss of divine experience of the Lord at any time, and as he experiences the Lord without any diminution, it is to be known that it is not re-birth.

It is not definitely known from what final body, one gains this kind of infinite divine experience. It may be from the body of a human being or from the body of a god. There is liberation even for the four-faced-Brahma and others. The variations of high and low that exists in the mumukshu state, do not follow in the state of liberation. The Mundaka Sruti expressly describes that all the liberated will attain ultimate equality with the omnipotent Ishvara. The statement of some people that there will be diminution in experience of bliss in respect of mumukshus, who have 'Achara Vaikalya' or 'imperfection of religious behaviour', is not affirming variation in divine experience after liberation. But, there may be such diminution of divine experience that occurs before he is liberated. There may be only difference in respect of time in gaining that liberation.

The designation of 'liberated' that is given to the people who have gained 'Salokya' or 'Sarupya' in other worlds of pure satva, is given on account of the fact that they are nearer to perfection. The statement –

"लोकेषु विष्णोर्निवसन्ति केचित् ।
समीपमिच्छन्ति च केचिदन्ये

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अन्ये तु रूपं सदृशं भजन्ते

सायुज्यमन्ये स तु मोक्ष उक्तः ॥"

makes this point clear. The 'Sayujya' or attainment of equality in auspicious qualities and others that is attained in 'Paramapada' only, is verily 'Sayujya'. The other terms like 'Salokya' and others are included in the 'Sayujya' and there is perfect equality in 'Sayujya'.

'Sayuk' is one who enjoys together (with Brahman), himself being an enjoyer. In the object of experience viz., Brahman, characterized by all his vibhutis, both Brahman and the liberated become enjoyers and so the liberated atman is called 'Sayuk'. Both Brahman and the Mukta are enjoyers and both of them enjoy Brahman with all his vibhutis. If a question is asked, why the Sruti uses the word 'Sarstita' along with 'sayujya', the answer is like this:–

The term 'sayujya' signifies that the object of enjoyment is the same for both. The term 'sarstita' signifies that there is no difference in the degree of experience of that object.

सायुज्यमुभयोरत्र भोक्तव्यस्याविशिष्टता ।

सार्ष्टिता तत्र भोगस्य तारतम्यविहीनता ॥

The liberated self, though does not engage himself in the process of creation of the worlds and others, derives equal delight in the creative functions of the Lord. Desika gives the analogy of a father engaged in agriculture, shares the result of his labour with his sons, who are not toiling in the fields. The 'Rasa' or Supreme Joy that is derived from 'jagadvyapara' of the Lord, is equally enjoyed by the Mukta, who is witnessing the wonderful deeds of the Lord. The view that 'Sayujya' means oneness of Paramatman and the Jivatman, has no support anywhere.

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'सामरस्यं हि सायुज्यं वदन्ति ब्रह्मवादिनः' says the grammarian Shakatayana. The word 'Sayujya' has not the connotation of oneness. Moreover, the duality texts affirm difference only, between Jivatman and Paramatman. The terms that are used by Lord Krishna in the Gita, are 'Samyam' and 'Sadharmyam' meaning equality. When a drop of pure water is dropped into pure water, it becomes ' 'तादृक्' i.e. similar to that and never तदेव । All these authorities establish that the liberated atman co-exists with Paramatman enjoying the supreme bliss of His communion for all time to come.

The unique characteristics of Paramatman never happen to the liberated atman. The Muktatman is ever supported, and ever ruled over by the Paramatman and is used to serve His purposes alone, for all time to come.

'Jagatkaranatva' or being the cause of this universe, 'Mokshapradatva' or granting liberation to the atmans, 'Sarvadharatva' or being the support of all entities other than himself, 'Sarvaniyantratva' or being the ruler of all other entities, 'Sarvasheshitva' or the fact of being served by all other entities, 'Sarvashariratva' or being the innerself of all entities, 'Sarvashabda-vachyatva' or being the import of all terms, 'Sarva-veda-vedyatva' or being the one that is known from all vedas, 'Sarvaloka-sharanyatva' or being the redeemer of all people in all worlds, 'Sarva-mumukshu-upasyatva' or being the object of meditation for all mumukshus, 'Sarva-Phala-Pradatva' or the fact of granting all fruits of all actions, 'Sarva-Vyaptatva' or the fact of pervading everything, 'jnananada-Swarupatva' or being of the essential nature of knowledge and bliss, 'Lakshmi-sahayatva' or being the consort of Goddess Mahalakshmi – all these characteristics are uniquely associated with Paramatman alone exclusively

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just like the 'chatra' and 'chamara' (the royal umbrella and the royal chauri) of the king.

As established in the vedanta sutras and as explained by Bhagavan Ramanuja, Desika expounds that there is no possibility of the liberated to be re-born in the material world. The Muktatman experiences everything as ensouled by Brahman and there is no occasion at all for experiencing 'his pure nature aloof', and as he has directly realised the defects of other objects of life, it cannot be doubted that the Muktaman returns to this world by his own desire. As the wisdom gained about the three entities viz. the chetana, achetana and Ishvara, and as regards the objects to be discarded and objects to be entertained, has now become fully established and expanded, it cannot be doubted that he might return to this world on account of his ignorance. The extension of knowledge of the form of love towards the Lord, called as 'bhakti', which has arisen in him, has become strengthened and fulfilled on account of directly experiencing the unique form, qualities and other characteristics of the Lord, on account of which his intense love towards the Lord has swelled, and so the all independent Lord will not make him born in this world by his mere 'sankalpa'. As he is not subordinated to Shastra at the state of liberation, there is no fear of transgressing commands of the Lord. As what pleases the Lord, will be the desire of the Mukta, and so, there is no 'Viparita-Anushtana' or committing the fault of going against the desire of the Lord; on account of all these factors and on account of the infinite affection that the Lord has for the liberated, there is absolutely no doubt about the non-return of a liberated self to this world. He will be eternally enjoying the supreme joy of divine communion for all time to come.

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स्थिरीकरणविभागः

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CHAPTER - XXIII

Siddhopaya Shodhanadhikara

Desika has expounded the doctrine of Prapatti in the twenty-two sections that we have already covered. In the succeeding four chapters, the doctrine is consolidated and established firmly by clearing the doubts and misapprehensions that may arise about this means of salvation. This portion is called 'Sthirikarana Bhaga'. Here, there are four sections. In the first section, known as, 'Siddhopaya Shodhana', or clearing doubts regarding the ever realised means or 'Siddhopaya', which happens to be 'Supreme Paramatman' himself, the doubts that may arise about the 'Siddhopaya' are cleared.

The section 'Sadhyopaya Shodhanadhikara', clears the doubts that may arise about the means of Prapatti. In the succeeding two chapters, the doubts that arise regarding the conduct and behaviour of a prapanna and the glory of a prapanna are cleared.

In the introductory verse, Desika expounds the essential nature of the 'Siddhopaya', the Supreme Paramatman, as follows :-

युगपदखिलं प्रत्यक्षेणं स्वतस्सततं विदन्
विरचिदयादिव्योदन्वान् अशक्यविवर्जितः ।
जलधिसुतया सार्धं देवो जगत्परिपालयन्
परमपुरुषस्सिद्धोपायः प्रतीष्टिभरस्सताम् ॥

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The Supreme Paramatman, who by his own nature knows everything directly, and always witnesses all entities directly is an ocean of infinite compassion, and is capable of accomplishing all things that he wills. He together with Goddess Mahalakshmi is the protector of this universe and the redeemer of humanity. He is the self-realised means of protection, and He takes upon himself the burden of protection of those aspirants who entrust Him with that burden of protection. In this verse, the essentials of the siddhopaya, have been expounded.

In the previous portions, the following factors were described in order :–

1. The individual self who is migrating from beginningless time in this world, would reform himself and realise the most essential object of attainment, on account of the grace of the Lord, which was waiting for an opportunity to operate.
2. He would realise the essential relationship of Sharira-Shariri Bhava between himself and the Paramatman and he would also be getting an essential knowledge of the Supreme Reality, the goal and the means of salvation.
3. He would transform himself into a mumukshu or an aspirant of liberation from samsara.
4. He would adopt and perform the means of spiritual realisation in accordance with his competence.
5. He would become a Kritakritya or one who has done what ought to be done.
6. He would engage himself in loving service to the Lord, following the dictates of the Shastras, and avoiding all

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kinds of 'aparadha' or offences so long as he would remain in this world.

7. After the fall of the body, he would move through the archiradi path and attain the Supreme Abode of Paramatman, and would enjoy the bliss of eternal communion with the Paramatman.

Paramatman happens to be the 'siddhopaya' or means already realised and Prapatti happens to be the 'sadhyopaya'.

Of all these truths, some doubts that may arise about the Siddhopaya, are to be cleared, and there are three prime factors, on account of which all these doubts can be totally cleared. They are –

1. the assurance given by Goddess Mahalakshmi (in answer to the prayer of Bhagavan Ramanuja) in Saranagati-Gadya as 'अस्तु ते तयैव सर्वं संपत्स्यते'।

2. the compassion of the great Acharyas and

3. the Satsampradaya-siddhi – the attainment of the instruction into the true knowledge of tatva, hita and purusharta, as taught by the preceptors, who are supremely 'satvik' in nature, and who are not after fame, wealth or worship (ख्यातिलाभपूजा निरपेक्षः) and who teach out of great compassion, the truths as received from the line of their preceptors, beginning with the Supreme Paramatman.

This kind of handing over of the knowledge from generation to generation through the medium of preceptors and disciples, ensures that the knowledge gained is authentic and valid. For those people, who are not enlightened upon the supreme truths, but who have faith, this 'upadesha' is

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most important. For more intelligent ones, it is necessary to listen to the expositions of preceptors for gaining perfect knowledge and also for enlightening those who have not precise knowledge, and are confused.

So, it amounts to saying this – To get rid of all doubts, one has to study the Shastras under compassionate preceptors and determine the truths supported by valid reasons.

For people, who have not listened thus to the Shastras, a number of doubts arise in various forms. Some think of depriving the glory of the Lord, and some say that there is no Ishvara at all. Some say that some one other than Paramatman as 'Sarveshvara' and point out that the Sarveshvara is the vibhuti of God. Some go to the extent of denying Ishvara totally.

It is natural that such doubts arise in the minds of even very faithful devotees and the Sadacharyas clear such doubts. It is mentioned –

एकं यदि भवेच्छास्त्रं ज्ञानं निस्संशयं भवेत् ।

बहुत्वादिह शास्त्राणां ज्ञानतत्त्वं सुदुर्लभम् ॥

If there were only one type of Shastra, wisdom would arise without any doubt. As the Shastras are very many and different from one another, real knowledge is very difficult to gain.

निस्संशयेषु सर्वेषु नित्यं वसति वै हरिः ।

ससंशयान् हेतुबलान् नाध्यावसति माधवः ॥

The Supreme Lord dwells in all people who are free from doubts (and have supreme faith in the truths taught).

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The Supreme Madhava deserts those people who always doubt and who argue with reasons.

It is established that doubts do arise in the minds of people desirous of evolving higher and higher, and that there are many obstacles on the path of perfection. Such doubts become cleared on account of the instructions of noble preceptors.

श्रूयते किल गोविन्दे भक्तिमुद्वहतां नृणाम् ।
संसारन्यूनता भीताः त्रिदशाः परिपन्थिनः ॥

It is heard that the gods are opponents to those people who carry devotion towards Lord Govinda, as they are afraid of the decrease in samsara. There are a hundred obstacles for truth, a thousand for penance; but, devotion of people towards Govinda is obstructed by ten thousand obstacles.

Desika describes all these before discussing the several doubts and clearing them to point out that it is natural to entertain doubts regarding the nature of the siddhopaya or Paramatman, who is already realised.

The doubts that arise in respect of the siddhopaya or ever realised means, are of three kinds :–

I. As connected with his qualities of supreme independence and infinite compassion

II. As regards the inseparable relationship of the Shesha and Sheshi, that exists between Jivatman and Paramatman.

III. In respect of the inseparable association of Goddess Sri with Him.

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I. Among these doubts, the doubt regarding his qualities of 'Swatantrya' and 'Karunya', is expounded as follows :–

Nammalwar has questioned the Lord thus –

"You have made me an object today, and you have inhabited my mind; but, on account of what reason, did you bind me to samsara and kept me to be far from you ?"

When the Alwar questioned like this, the Lord kept quiet, without giving a definite answer. He simply described the glory of a mumukshu going through 'archiradi'. Does this not signify that binding one to samsara, and releasing him from bondage happen strictly according to his own independent will and nature ? He is free to bless one with compassion and if He himself protects one, that soul can attain Him. So, where is the need for one to perform any spiritual discipline ?

He may protect or not protect, according to his will; where is any room at all for a chetana to practise some mokshopaya or other ?

The above doubt is answered as follows :–

Though the Supreme Paramatman is all independent, He causes the chetana to practise some pretext or other, and depending upon that pretext, He protects that chetana for guarding himself from the defects of partiality and cruelty. The 'Sutrakara' points out that the Supreme Paramatman has no partiality or cruelty, as his actions are all related to the respective karmas of those chetanas (2-1-34). Even Nammalwar has shown this truth, in his hymns as follows:–

"I uttered the name of the Mount Tirumalirumsholai and on that pretext, the Supreme Paramatman came and entered fully into my mind."

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If it is asked why that Supreme Paramatman did not cause the Alwar even earlier to do this pretext, and why did He let him down earlier, it is answered that, when the beginningless stream of karma attains the stage of fruition, such a will of the Lord will arise; because, He is a dispenser of fruits according to one's own karma, and if otherwise, the fault of partiality happens to Him. One has to understand from the particular effect at a particular time, that such an occasion did not occur earlier. From the 'karya', one has to infer the 'karana'. If it is not agreed like this, it becomes difficult to answer why a person has an aspiration for moksha at a particular time, but which was not earlier. This question cannot be answered unless it is accepted that it is according to the will of the Lord, who was pleased with some pretext or other.

If it is asked how the question raised by Nammalwar about "accepting him at a particular time, and letting him go far from Him before", can be answered, the answer is as follows :–

There is no prime cause other than Supreme Independence and Compassion of the Lord for making one turn towards God, and making one averse to God. If there is any other reason than these, you may please tell me – asks Nammalwar. As Ishvara kept silent, it is made known to the world that 'svatantrya' and 'krupa' of the Lord are the prime factors for both. The prime cause for making chetana an instrument of his 'lila' is the 'svatantrya' of the Lord. The accessory cause for this, is the transgression of the command of the Supreme Paramatman from beginningless time. That means that the Lord is subjecting one to samsara on account of his supreme independence, and in this act, He is doing so

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on account of the transgression of his command by the chetana. Likewise, His natural compassion is the prime cause of releasing one from the bondage of samsara. The 'sahakari' karana or the accessory cause for removing the wrath of the Lord, happens to be the 'vashikarana-visesha' or the particular acts of surrender or upasana that happens to one, on account of his 'sukrutha visesha' that pleases the Lord. The idea is that the Lord releases one from bondage on account of His compassion, when one observes the pretext of an upasana or self-surrender. He can act only when there is an occasion, and self-surrender or upasana happens to be that occasion. Similarly, His supreme independence is the cause of binding one to samsara. But, he binds one who has transgressed his command, and not anyone according to his own whim and fancy. By thus explaining the essential nature of the Supreme Paramatman viz. supreme independence and infinite compassion, the fact of being non-partial and ever merciful, the regulation regarding bondage and release, all these become harmonised. The gist of all this is that one should utterly depend upon the compassion of the all independent Supreme Paramatman.

The svatantrya of a merciless person is harmful. Similarly, the compassion of a powerless person is of no help to others and a source of discomfort for him also. The 'karunya' of a 'svatantra' will fulfil His 'sankalpa' and so, pleases Him most. It will be the cause of 'ishta-prapti' and 'anista-nivritti' to all those that take resort in Him. The Lord is a satya-sankalpa and so the mercy of the all–powerful Lord, gives Him delight and will be for the redemption of those who take refuge in Him. The prime qualities of the Lord are jnanam, sakti and karunya. Of these, jnana and sakti are common for both 'nigraha' and 'anugraha' but 'karunya'

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is uniquely responsible for 'anugraha' alone.

The infinite compassion of the Lord is the prime cause for (1) the nature and existence of all the three kinds of chetanas and achetanas; (2) the creation of the world; (3) the promulgation of the Shastras; (4) the enlightenment of the knowledge relating to tattva, hita and purushartha; (5) the origination of an aspiration for liberation; (6) redeeming the erring humanity that seek refuge in Him; (7) functioning in the place of an upaya for one who is an 'akinchana'; (8) ignoring and excusing infinite faults of the chetanas that take refuge with Him on account of the mere 'vyaja' or pretext of bhakti and prapatti; (9) granting His infinite bliss of communion after terminating once for all their migration from birth to birth; (10) causing repentence in the minds of the prapannas for the faults committed intentionally and making them observe some expiation according to their competence (11) purifying such hardliners that do not repent by inflicting light punishments and leading them to His eternal abode. For all these, the compassion of the Lord is the prime cause.

The Lord of this nature viz. 'krupavishista' is the 'siddhopaya' or ever realised means. An aspirant after moksha, is enjoined to seek refuge with Him. This is something which ought to be done for being saved. Though Ishvara is most supreme and He may do whatever He likes, He is full of compassion and one should appeal to His compassion to get over his nigrahas. If His wrath is removed, His natural compassion flows spontaneously. So, the means of bhakti and prapatti are 'sadhyopayas' that are pretexts to awaken His mercy. So, these upayas are to be practised as ordained.

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II. Doubts that arise in respect of the inherent relationship between Paramatman and the chetanas are cleared as follows:–

The Ishvara is the 'sheshin' and we are the 'sheshabhutas'. We are just like infants and He is entitled to protect us just like a mother protects the infants. When our relationship is like this, does it befit our essential nature to cry bitterly or to perform 'atma-samarpanam' – self-surrender for protection, just like giving wages for the breast-milk of the mother, or to desire that He should save us, and to have supreme faith in Him ? Should we not simply keep quiet being aware of this relationship ?

Vedanta Desika points out that by such doubts, the objecters are trying to efface the accessories of the 'sadhyopaya' viz. prapatti, through the 'siddhopaya'. It is pointed out that great sages and Bhagavan Ramanuja and other great masters have surrendered unto the Paramatman with supreme faith, and prayer to be protected, and that they have also taught others that one should surrender at the feet of the Lord, and they have also shown scriptural authorities for the same. It is stoutly stated that though the relationship of 'sheshitva' is eternal, in respect of those who are under the domination of karma, the Lord would not protect one without one's performance of some 'sadhyopaya'. As all these are ordained by the shastra, one has to abide by this. If we do not give heed to the shastra, even the relationship of 'shesha-sheshi' will not be established. So, it is to be understood that the fact that the Lord is entitled to protect one on account of the relationship with the jiva, and that the jivatman being a 'shesha-bhuta' is not capable of protecting himself, is merely pointing out the

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appropriateness, as observed in the world. But, by this alone, it is not to be taken that He would be a 'nirapeksha-karana.' If it is taken like that, it results in the eventuality of all people being eternally liberated. If it is stated that the Lord can do so on account of his svatantrya, then the Lord will be subjected to the defects of partiality and cruelty.

If these truths are to be established only on the basis of reasons, then they would desire for only 'sambandha-jnanam'. It cannot be said that 'rakshapeksha' is not necessary. Non-sentient objects, animals, birds and infants are, as bereft of desire for being protected, without the knowledge of 'sambandha' or relationship. We are seeing that they are being protected. If it is said, though we are seeing like this, that sambandha-jnana is essential as ordained by the shastra, then the particular kind of jnana of the form of 'anushtana' also should be accepted.

If it is argued that when the Lord rushes to protect one, one should not ward him away, and the Lord's protection will be actualised, and this kind of 'anivarana' is only what is wanted, we say, it is not so; because, the Lord may grant moksha to a chetana, when he is not capable of warding Him away, such as in the state of 'sushupti' and others. It cannot be further said that if one does not prevent Him from rendering protection, when he is capable of doing so, is only what is wanted, that is also countered by the instance of protection given to non-sentient objects and reluctant animals, children and others. The following verse is quoted as an authority for non-performance of any means of protection :–

ये नाथवन्तो हि भवन्ति लोके
ते नात्मकार्याणि समारभन्ते ।

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तेषां हि कार्येषु भवन्ति नाथाः

शैब्यादयो राम यथा ययातेः ॥

The meaning of this verse is that those people who have a master, do not make any effort to save themselves. Those masters themselves will look after them.

Desika points out that the term 'natha' used here signifies both prayer for protection and 'atma-nikshepa'. The idea is when one has entrusted the responsibility of one's protection to the master, he will not engage himself in any kind of self-help. The term 'nathavantah' signifies so much meaning, and otherwise it will become untenable to apply what all is said in 'loka-neeti' to moksha-shastra.

यदर्थस्तु कृतो न्यासः तदर्थं न पुनः किया

पूर्वमप्यपराधीनप्रवृत्तौ अस्य नान्वयः ॥

The meaning of this verse is, a person, who has totally surrendered the burden of his protection to the Lord, is not entitled to function in his protection. Even in the earlier stage, what he did in entrusting the burden of his protection, was not solely on account of himself but was caused by the all merciful Lord on account of some casual good done by him knowingly or unknowingly. Thus, Desika has pointed out that when the Lord, the all protector, protects one, he causes him to undertake some means as a pretext, and saves him from samsara. This infinite grace of the Lord that spontaneously flows, depends upon the desire of the aspirant, just as the suckling of an infant for the breast-milk of the mother.

So, it is concluded by Desika that some kind of spiritual

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discipline or other is absolutely necessary for awakening the grace of the Lord.

III. Doubts that arise in connection with the inherent relationship of Goddess Sri with the Supreme Paramatman, Sriman Narayana, are dispelled further.

The Supreme Lord who has taken upon himself the responsibility of saving erring humanity, is declared to be such a protector along with Goddess Sri –

लक्ष्म्या सह हृषीकेशः देव्या कारुण्यरूपया

रक्षकः सर्वसिद्धान्ते वेदान्तेषु च गीयते ॥

The Supreme Lord is declared as a protector, along with Goddess Lakshmi, who is an incarnation of compassion, according to all doctrines and vedanta. Here, the dvaya-mantra also has the term 'Srimath' both in the 'poorva' and 'uttara' khanda. Some masters are of the opinion that the word 'Srimath' in the 'poorva' khanda, is an 'upa-lakshana' or indication, and the same term in the 'uttara' khanda is a 'visheshana' or an inseparable attribute. Thus, the same term 'Srimath' is explained differently in the two contexts.

Desika points out that it is not tenable to give different implications for the same term that qualifies the term 'Narayana'.

If it is pointed out that considering 'Sri' also along 'Narayana', leads to the eventuality of 'upaya-dvitva' and is opposed to the concept of 'ananyopayatva' of the Lord, it is stated by Desika, that on the grounds of the same reason 'Sri' should also be considered as an 'upalakshana' alone, even in the 'uttara' khanda, lest 'ananyaprapyatva' is not harmed. If it is conceded that 'Sri' may be only an 'upa-lakshana' in

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both places, then it results in the eventuality of the auspicious qualities, auspicious divine form of the Lord, and the divine functions, all becoming 'upa-lakshanas'. If it is further argued that the qualities, divine form and actions are 'visheshanas', as they are helpful, it has to be known that, in the same way, as it is helpful, the relationship with 'Sri' is also to be taken as 'visheshana'. All these can be ascertained by the means of valid knowledge and the unbroken tradition or 'sampradaya'. The Alwars have said that Goddess Lakshmi dispels all sins, and they pray for the grace of the Lord and the grace of Goddess Mahalakshmi. The Ramayana points out that Mother Sita is capable of giving protection. The great masters of yore have described the greatness and glory of Goddess 'Sri' as 'संसारार्णवतारिणीं', 'आत्मविद्या च देवीत्वं विमुक्तिफलदायिनी,' 'यामालंब्य सुखेनेमां दस्तरं हि गुणोदधिं' । निस्तरन्त्यचिरेणैव व्यक्तध्यान परायणाः ॥

It can be known from all these references that the term 'Srimath' is the 'visheshana' of the Supreme Paramatman just as the auspicious divine form and auspicious qualities are 'visheshanas'.

Desika summarises all these thoughts in the following verses :–

भरस्वीकाररहितं रक्षासंकल्पवर्जितम् ।
गुणादिकमिहेष्टं हि शरण्यस्य विशेषणम् ॥
ऐकरस्यजुषोश्शेषिदम्पत्योस्सर्वकर्मसु ।
विशेषणविशेष्यत्वं श्रुतं कस्मात्न रोचते ॥
प्रतर्दनादि विद्यासु वेद्येऽपि परमात्मनि ।
अचेतनवदिच्छामः चेतनं च विशेषणम् ।

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इत्थं प्रपत्तिविद्यायां तत्तन्मन्त्रानुसारतः ।.
विभुः पत्न्या गुणाद्यैश्च विशिष्टो विषयोऽत्र नः।

The auspicious qualities like supremacy, compassion and others as well as his Divine form, that are bereft of any resolution to protect or accepting the burden of protection, are admitted as 'visheshanas' of the redeemer. Why does not this fact of Sriman Narayana having Goddess Lakshmi as an inseparable visheshana, that is known from the Srutis, appeal to you ? The Divine Couple have mutual agreement and same purpose in all their actions and never differ even in the slightest measure in anything. In the type of meditations such as meditation upon Indra Prana, taught to Pratardana, though Paramatman alone is to be meditated upon, the chetana i.e. Indra is desired as a visheshana just like a non-sentient object.

Thus, in Prapatti, the means of spiritual perfection to be performed according to the respective mantras, the Paramatman characterised with His consort Mahalakshmi and His auspicious qualities, is the one to whom the burden of protection is to be entrusted with supreme faith.

It may not be doubted that 'upayaikya' or oneness of upaya, would be harmed, if Sri is also included in the upaya. Desika explains this fact as follows :—

As it is explicit in the term 'Narayana' and 'charana' that the upaya is only one as characterised by gunavishesha and vigraha-vishesha, even in the same way, He happens to be nityapatnisambandha-visishta and so, there is no eventuality of upaya-dvitva. It is to be noted here, that the glory of Paramatman is enhanced by the attribute of the form of Sri,

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that Paramatman Himself is of unsurpassable glory on account of His own essential nature. His auspicious nature is svabhavasiddha and He is 'ananyadheena-kalyanam.'

It may be noted that they are mutually glorifying each other, and so, the supremacy of Paramatman does not become diminished if it is qualified by Goddess Sri.

The Divine Couple are the sheshins and all others are subservient to them.

As in sacrifices, duality of deities such as Indra–Vishnu, etc., are invoked together and offered oblations, likewise, these two together form one single Divinity. Wherever there is a mention of Paramatman 'Sri' is also included in it. 'तदन्तर्भावात् त्वां न पृथगभिधत्ते श्रुतिरपि' say our masters.

So, it is concluded by Desika that it is to be reflected upon that 'Sri' is a visheshana to Narayana in the purva-khanda also, and that Narayana characterised by 'Sri' is the upaya, and thus the Divine Couple together happen to be our upaya to be sought.

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CHAPTER - XXIV

Sadhyopaya Shodhanadhikara

Though it has been declared that Bhakti Yoga and Ptipathi are both valid means for attainment of spiritual perfection by savants of yore, Prapatti has become the practical religion of Srivaishnavism after the time of Bhagavan Ramanuja. Ramanuja gave full emphasis to Prapatti and propounded it as a sufficient and valid means of attainment of godhead. Ramanuja did not deny importance to Bhakti Yoga or Upasana. He upheld stoutly the doctrine of Upasana as a 'mokshopaya', in his Sri Bhasyham, Vedartha Sangraha, Gita Bhashya and others ; and likewise, he propounded the doctrine of Prapatti in his three 'Gadyas'.

1. Prapatti has supreme importance in shaping the fortune of the multitudes of finite selves and it is to be thoroughly understood so that one may not have any doubt about this doctrine. One should have a through knowledge of Siddhopaya, and likewise, one should also understand thoroughly the means of Prapatti that is to be adopted. Vedanta Desika has dispelled all doubts that may arise about the nature of Prapatti, the accessories and competency of Prapatti, in this section viz. Sadhyopaya Shodhanadhikara. This happens to be a powerful vindication of the doctrine of Prapatti and is of prime importance.

It is argued by some that Prapatti is not within the competency of all people, as it is a vedic-dharma. It is restricted to the upper three classes as it is considered as a

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Yaga Vishehsa or a kind of sacrifice. The answer to this objection is that the above view is not in agreement with the scriptural declaration of Swetaswathara Upanishad, which describes that the Supreme Paramatman is the one refuge for all humanity.

सर्वस्य प्रभुमीशानं सर्वस्य शरणं सुहृत् (श्वे.उ. 3-17)

मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये (श्वे.उ. 6-18)

सर्वलोक शरण्याय signifies that all castes and creeds are included in having competency for this means. Statements such as –

सर्वयोग्यं अनायासं अप्रमादमनुपमम् ।

प्रपन्नार्तिहरं विष्णुं शरणं गन्तुमर्हसि ॥

"Lord Vishnu is a refuge for all people and and the means of surrender is fit for all without any rigour and which is without an equal."

The statement 'त्रयाणां क्षत्रियादीनां' includes in its purview, the three castes viz. kshatriya, vaisya and sudra. Prapatti is a 'samanya dharma' which is universal to all. The vedic injunctions are of two kinds viz. Universal dharmas and particular dharmas and as Prapatti happens to be 'samanya dharma', just like 'sathya vachana' (or speaking the truth), it is applicable to all. As there are distinct statements declaring the competency of one and all without any restriction of caste and others, Prapatti is meant for all. There are no restrictions in the general statements regarding practice of Prapatti as in the case of Upasanas. This Prapatti is certainly for one who has 'akinchanya', whether one is a त्रैवर्णिक or not.

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The Lord Himself has declared,

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्राः तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

(गीता - 9-32)

2. Regarding the nature Prapatti, it is declared that it is supreme faith alone in the Supreme Lord' 'नारायणं सलक्ष्मीकं प्राप्तुं तच्चरणद्वयम्। उपाय इति विश्वासः द्वयार्थः शरणागतिः'। On the basis of this, it is argued that Prapatti is only of the form of Supreme Faith and so, no act other than having faith, is necessary.

The answer to this argument is that 'Maha Vishvasa' is emphasised in the above verse to point out its importance for becoming competent for performance of Prapatti, and also as it is an accessory to Prapatti. The meaning of this is –

सकृत् प्रार्थनामात्रेण अपेक्षितं दास्यतीति
विश्वासपूर्वकं प्रार्थनम् इति यावत् ॥

That means, "by merely submitting a prayer once, the Lord will grant our wishes – having faith like this, one should pray to the Lord." Here prayer is prefaced with supreme faith to point out 'vishvasa-poorvaka-prarthana'. 'Atma Nikshepa' is the main factor and others are accessories, as known from the statement 'न्यासः पञ्चाङ्गसंयुतः'। The Lord will be expecting the expression of desire to be protected and so the supreme importance of faith is ordained in this. Ramanuja mentions this in his Sriranga Gadya as – 'नित्यदास्यं दास्यतीति विश्वासपूर्वकं भगवन्तं नित्यकिंकरतां प्रार्थये' । And as he

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concludes there as 'नमोऽस्तुते' surrendering of the self is also established.

Here the fact of supreme faith is denoted as an accessory to the surrender of the atman that is mentioned later. In Vaikunatha Gadyam, it is expressly mentioned that 'Atma Nikshepa' should be preceded by 'prarthana' or prayer. The main factor of the surrender of the atman is expressly mentioned in all these authorities viz. –

'अनेनैव तु मन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत्', 'आत्मात्मीय भरन्यासः'
'प्रपत्तिं तां प्रयुञ्जीत स्वांगैः पञ्चभिरावृताम्', 'न्यासः पञ्चांगसंयुतः' ॥

'These ordain that 'Atma Nikshepa' alone is the main factor, and others are accessories to it. There are a number of authorities that affirm the fact of the cultic act of surrender of the atman to the Lord and 'maha-vishvasa' or supreme faith, is an accessory to such an act. Without the surrender actually taking place, and by having a mere desire for being protected, cessation of one's own activity for one's protection, does not occur. So, it is the essence of all shastras that mere supreme faith does not signify Prapatti, but self-surrender with faith is the sure way of one's protection. 'अकृते तु भरन्यासे रक्षापेक्षणमात्रतः । पश्चात् स्वयत्नविरतिः न प्रसिध्यति लोकवत् ' ॥

3. It is argued by some that full understanding of one's relationship with the Lord, is exactly what is going to redeem him, and there is no need for Prapatti to be enjoined. When one realises the secret teachings of the shastras, he will reflect upon his subservience to the Lord. Is it not said that one should always remember one's subservience and the over lordship of the

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Paramatman, if one wants to uplift himself, and fulfil the purpose of his existence.

"स्वोज्जीवनेच्छा यदि ते स्वसत्तायां स्पृहा यदि ।
आत्मदास्यं हरेः स्वाम्यं स्वभावं च सदा स्मर" ॥

Knowing this reality of the Lord being the Master and the jivatman being subservient to Him, one is asked to behave in accordance with this understanding. Is there a different factor that is to be enjoined as surrender of the self, apart from this ? Desika points out that this objection is not tenable just like the view of some that say moksha is possible on account of mere understanding of the meaning of the 'mahavakyas' (i.e. Vakyajanya Jnanamatram) or the significant statements like 'That Thou art'.

When a person has committed the sin of stealing away the atman, the expiation of that is, offering the atman at His feet. This fact of subservience to the Lord is an understanding that should qualify an aspirant after moksha. This 'sheshatva-jnanam' will certainly prevent from stealing away the atman from the Lord later.

'शिष्टं ह्यात्मापहारस्य निष्कृतिः स्वभरार्पणम् ।
परशेषत्वधीमात्रं अधिकारि विशेषणम् ॥
पश्चादात्मापहारस्य निरोधाय च कल्पते' ॥

For a person who has realised the knowledge of 'sheshatva' that is obtained from the shastras, it is ordained that he should surrender his self unto the Lord, having supreme faith in the saving grace of the Lord, along with the desire for gaining moksha at a particular time.

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Even the statement 'तत्वज्ञानात् मोक्षः' implies the practice of some spiritual discipline as prescribed in statement like 'भजस्व माम्' ; 'मामेकं शरणं व्रज' etc.

This is summarised in the following verse :–

'ज्ञानान्मोक्षोपदेशे हि तत्पूर्वोपासनादिना ।
उपासनादिरूपाद्वा ज्ञानान्मोक्षो विवक्षितः' ॥

The intention of the statement – there is liberation from knowledge – is that moksha is gained through upasana or Prapatti that is done, after gaining that knowledge. Mere 'sheshatva' jnanam that is gained from the shastras, is common to all disciplines for liberation, such as Prapatti and Upasana. The ultimate state of purushartha for mumukshu, is kainkarya or loving service to the Lord and it is not possible to practise a mokshopaya without having a 'sheshatva-jnanam'. Even when one practises a dharma for gaining moksha, without having that 'sheshatva-jnana', those dharmas themselves will cause 'sheshatva-jnanam' and make perfect his discipline for moksha.

So, the mokshopaya is – swa-raksha-bhara-nyasa – characterised by sheshatva-jnanam. The injunctions viz. 'शरणं व्रज' , 'प्रपत्तिं तां प्रयुंजीत' expressly ordain that Prapatti should be performed.

4. Sometimes, it is argued that the 'charma-sloka' indicates that Ishvara is the means of attainment of moskha and nothing more is ordained in this behalf. If it is taken thus, it would amount to mere instruction of the truth that would be helpful to Bhakti Yoga. If it is further argued that for a person who is endowed with the knowledge of

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reality, cessation of activities for self-protection happens to be Prapatti, and therefore, what is prescribed here is the abandonment of 'sarva-dharmas'. The reply is that the abandonment of all dharmas verily happens to be - 'swarakshanarthaswa-vyapara' - i.e. his activity meant for his protection, and therefore, it contradicts his own statement, and also the injunction that one should surrender with all accessories to the Lord.

If prapatti is taken as a means साधनं or if it is taken as a helpful factor to the means already realised (सिद्धसाधन सहकारित्व) then it would be opposed to the nature of the supreme means or 'Ishwara', who is declared as the one means of liberation. The oneness, the nature of being already realised, the supreme consciousness, the supreme compassion, the omnipotence and the fact of not depending upon any other factor for protection, - such particular characteristics of Ishvara, will be harmed. (एकत्व, सिद्धत्व, परमचेतनत्व, परम कारुणिकत्व, सर्वशक्तित्व and निरपेक्षत्व)

This position is not valid because, it is opposed to Srutis, the Smritis and also as this does not apply in all cases. If it is insisted upon these arguments, as valid reasons, then the 'sadhana-bhava' or the fact of being spiritual disciplines that are accepted, will have to be taken as disturbed. Even the upasanams will have to lose their sadhanatva. If it is said that upasana is not at all a sadhana, then it contradicts their own interpretation of the term 'sarva-dharman-parityajya' where upasana is included in the term 'sarva-dharman'.

As Prapatti or sharana-varana, is also called by the name 'dharma' just like 'upasana', is not this also to be discarded to fulfil the significance of the term 'sarva'? This also is included

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in the group of dharmas; so, how can one have an idea of sadhana in Prapatti ? Or, how can Prapatti be a sahakari to the ever realised means i.e. sidda-sadhana or Paramatman ?

It is admitted that one should give up the idea of the direct means in Prapatti as well as in Bhakti Yoga. But, in the form of 'prasadanatva' or awakening the grace of the Lord, 'dharmatva' or the fact of being a means, should not be abandoned. In that case, one should have to give up the sadanatva-buddhi in the siddhopaya also, as the Lord is called 'Krishnam-Dharmam-Sanatanam'. If it is asked how 'Bhakti' or 'Prapatti' are upakarakas to siddhopaya, who is eternal and of the same form always; always perfect and having the qualities of natural compassion and others, it is replied that these means are effective in removing the wrath of the Lord, which is the cause of migration and which is caused on account of beginningless transgression of the command of the Lord. For an aspirant after moskha, who adopts the sadhyopaya according to his ability, the Lord on that pretext itself–will cause the removal of diminution of knowledge, etc., and grant him the benefit of His eternal service for all time to come. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to expound that 'the destruction of all sins and the granting of paripurna kainkarya' is on account of the siddhopaya or ever realised means i.e. Paramatman, and that this supreme benefit accrues on account of some sadhyopaya such as 'bhakti' or 'prapatti'.

5. It is sometimes argued like this –

Let Prapatti be a pretext for awakening the mercy of the Lord; but, where is the need for the shastra to prescribe it ?

A person who is in trouble, and who cannot protect himself, naturally approaches a near-by person for help.

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Then, if a person is aware of Ishvara from the shastra, he will naturally seek His protection, and there is no need for the shastra to prescribe it.

Desika points out that it is an 'athivada' based on 'ouchitya' or appropriateness. He gives the illustration of a person seeking refuge with another person in this world. He understands first of all, how he should approach a person for getting a favourable response, and then seeks his refuge. Even in the case of Prapatti, one should understand earlier how he should seek refuge with the Lord, and how the Lord would protect one approaching like that, and for knowing this, there is no 'pramana' other than the shastras. If, by the inference that Lord would protect us if we seek Him, it would be applicable to all who have an awareness of godhead, and the shastras prescribing upasana and others would become futile. It cannot be known from inference that a capable person could practise upasana, whereas an incapable person might resort to the means of Prapatti. It is only from shastras that we can understand that Prapatti is a sufficient and capable substitute to Bhakti Yoga. If one undertakes such deeds ignoring the shastras, he would be committing offences, as all the particulars of Prapatti, are to be known from the shastras alone. It is to be admitted that Prapatti along with its accessories is to be prescribed by the shastras for the guidance of the aspirants on account of the above reasons.

6. Though it is ordained by the shastras that one may adopt Prapatti or Upasana in accordance with one's own ability, it is mentioned by some that upasana or Bhakti Yoga is opposed to the essential nature of the jivatman, who is utterly subservient to Paramatman. Desika says that this is also intended to praise Prapatti.

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It cannot be said that the practice or Upasana or Prapatti, is opposed to the essential nature of the atman, which is eternal. As in the case of kainkarya, even in practice of Prapatti or Bhakti Yoga, there is 'Bhagavadadhinakartrutva' or doership subordinated to, or given by the Lord,' as propounded by the Brahmasutras, and so, it cannot be said that the essential nature of the jivatman is 'atyanta-nirvyapara' or totally devoid of any kind of doership. In that case, it will become a non-entity. It cannot be said that 'sannidhimatra' or mere presence is the function of the atman, without even enjoyership, in which case, the world becomes unreal and there will not be even an aspiration for liberation. So, it cannot be said that upasanas are 'svarupa-viruddha' on account of the absence of kartrutva as in the case of the sankyhas.

"Is it not said", it may be asked, "that wealth comes to one who refrains from any action and one who follows karma cannot even get a sip of water to drink?" This also does not speak of the futility of the means prescribed by the shastras, but emphasises that the results of karmas done earlier cannot be escaped.

Moreover, upasanas are not of the nature of binding one to samsara, as kamya and prohibited actions, that are caused by desire and others causes, are. It cannot be said that upasanas are svarupa-viruddha on the authority of the shastras.

7. It may be further argued thus –

'The atman is distinct and different from the body. So, varna and asramas are not in the essential nature of the atman. The duties of the varna and asramas and the means that are

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related to the varnas and asramas are not to be taken up. So, why not we say that the dharmas that are on account of varnas and asramas, are opposed to the essential nature of the atman ?"

Desika points out that this also is incompatible. A person is associated with a body characterised by brahminhood, and others, on account of his past karmas; though he understands that brahminhood and others are not in his essential nature, he has to perform the duties ordained by the shastras, so long as he is associated with such bodies, as he acts to satisfy hunger and thirst, according to his ability. In the same way, he has to function for 'ishta-prapatti' and 'anishta-nivritti' as ordained by the shastras. So, it cannot be said that these duties are to be discarded as svarupa-viruddha, on the basis of 'dehatmaviveka'. It is only a person, who has the discriminatory knowledge of body and soul that is entitled to undertake spiritual discipline. The 'adhikara' or competence for practice of these dharmas is the association with body characterised with brahminhood and others. There is no contradiction to upasana from the knowledge of body-soul discrimination because such dehatma-viveka is helpful for the practice of all dharmas.

Karma Yoga and others are performed with the help of the 'upadhis' such as body and indriyas that are got due to karma and so are they not against the 'nirupadikasvarupa' of the atman ? A counter question is put in this behalf. How are the factors of the essential nature of the atman and the meanings of dvaya-mantra and others known ? Are they not depending upon the mind and other 'upadhis' ? But yet, the atman is an utterly dependent entity being a 'shesha' of Paramatman, and is not liable to protect himself. So, is it reasonable to enjoin on him to practise some means for his own protection ? Is it proper to call that means a

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sadhyopaya ? So, should we not say that Bhakti Yoga and others are not appropriate as they are not in accordance with 'sheshatva' and also as they defile the essential nature of the atman and also as they are totally opposed to the utter dependence of the atman upon Paramatman ?

This objection has been already cleared, as it leads to the eventuality of 'sarva-moksha'. If the Lord were to liberate one, even without considering any pretext done by him, everyone would have become liberated from beginningless time. If Ishvara is going to liberate one, merely on account of His supreme power, the defects of partiality and cruelty would happen to Him. Moreover, the scriptures that ordain 'mokshopaya' or the means of liberation, would become futile. So, it becomes appropriate in adopting some means of liberation for the atman, and for the master to protect such a one, who verily belongs to Him.

8. **The performance of the varna-asrama-dharmas and also Bhakti Yoga, which has those dharmas as its accessories, is opposed, it is contended, to the essential nature of the atman, who has known that he exists only for the Paramatman. An exclusive devotee of this type is a 'shuddha Yajin' and it is argued that such a person should not practise the duties of his varna and ashrama, as there is association of other deities like Agni, Indra, Varuna and others.**

Desika points out that this objection has come only due to want of a clear understanding of the conclusions taught in Sri Bhashya and other works of great masters. It is ordained that the one and the same Paramatman, who is the 'antaryamin' in all, is being worshipped through the worship of all deities. The Pratardana Vidya distinctly ordains that

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the spiritual aspirant should meditate upon Brahman as having Indra and others as His body. There is no contradiction to exclusive devotion in the performance of varnasrama dharmas as even all those names of deities directly connote the Supreme Paramatman and as a devotee worships through them the one Supreme Paramatman.

9. It may be further argued that upasanas are prescribed in order to produce faith in the efficacy of the shastras, just like the 'abhicharikya kriyas' that are meant for creating faith. The Supreme Paramatman happens to be the 'means' and the 'goal'. So, prapatti alone is the means and never the upasanas.

Desika points out that this is untenable, as upasanas are not sources of evil as the 'abhicharika kriyas' are. Upasanas are means of liberation and so they are valid.

Upasanas are not prescribed just to create a desire in the minds of the aspirants for the adoption of easier means. Success through an easier means causes faith in a more difficult means. The knowledge of the means or upaya, that is appropriate to the attainment of the prapya, is known from the shastras, and it cannot be decided on the basis of mere and independent 'yukti' or reasoning. If the authority of the shastras is questioned as relating to upasanas, by parity of reasoning, the authorities prescribing Prapatti also become invalid. So, both Bhakti Yoga and Prapatti are valid means to mukti, as they have been enjoined by the shastras for different types of aspirants, according to their competence and ability.

10. It cannot be said that upasanas are to be ignored, though they are ordained, as they are (शिष्टपरिग्रह विरुद्ध) or

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opposed to the practices of शिष्टs, as we see that ancient masters like Parasara and others following them. It cannot be said that they are not suitable for the present times as people qualified for upasanas are difficult to be found. It is probable even in these days that such upasakas may be here and there practising meditation just like the great yogins of yore. As there is no contradiction to upasanas it may be taken as a valid means for spiritual perfection.

A person who has chosen this path of Prapatti on account of his inability to practise Bhakti Yoga, and on account of his inability to wait for any length of time to attain moksha after exhausting all his 'prarabdha' karmas by experience, is praised as one who has done what ought to be done, and as one who has performed the sacrifice . This nyasa vidya is glorified as follows :–

सत्कर्मनिरताः शुद्धाः सांख्ययोगविदस्तथा ।
नार्हन्ति शरणस्थस्य कलां कोटितमीमपि ॥

"The karma-yogins, bhakti-yogins and jnana-yogins – all these do not equal even one-croreth-part of a person who has sought refuge with the Lord." A person incapable of taking an ablution in a river for purifying himself, is ordained to have 'manasa-snanam', which is defined as 'manasam Vishnu-Chintanam'. The merit of this manasa-snanam is that it not only puts an end to other sins, but will also cause the bliss of Divine experience (Bhagavadanubhava Rasa). Likewise, this Prapatti, though prescribed for one who is not capable of undertaking upasanas, not only grants the fruits of upasana, but also evolves upward a person who is utterly helpless.

Having set aside the probable doubts and objections

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that can be raised in respect of the nature and efficacy of Prapatti, Desika dispels some of the misconceptions that might be entertained regarding the accessories of Prapatti as follows :–

A. "Is there any need for Anukulya sankalpa and others for Prapatti' – it is asked. The Lord is ever compassionate and has given an assurance that he would not discard anyone that approaches Him, even in the guise of a friend – 'मित्रभावेन संप्राप्तं न त्यजेयं कथञ्चन'। He does not see the defects of even enemies. 'यदिवा रावणः स्वयम्'। 'अनालोचितविशेषाशेषलोकशरण्यं' । "He is the refuge of all and he does not consider the Particulars of those that surrender unto Him". So, could it not be said that 'Anukulya sankalpa and others' may be there or not, the Lord would anyhow protect one who surrenders unto Him.

Desika points out that these are very necessary as accessories at the time of Prapatti. But, at some further time, even if they do not continue, the Lord would not abandon him, but would save him by expiating his sin in some way or other. There are authorities that ordain these accessories along with the main act of surrender as in – 'न्यासः पञ्चाङ्गसंयुतः', 'षड्विधा शरणागतिः', 'स्वाङ्गैः पञ्चभिरावृतम्' and others. Thus it is maintained that Anukulya Sankalpa and others are absolutely necessary at the time of Prapatti. Prapatti does not, however, require any other thing than these. Even Brahmastra requires its accessories.

The verse 'प्रपत्तेः क्वचिदप्येवं परापेक्षा न विद्यते । सा हि सर्वत्र सर्वेषां सर्व कामफलप्रदा'॥ points out that there is no need of any other accessory than these.

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B. Is there anything like 'Maha-vishvasa', other than faith in the shastras, that can be prescribed as an accessory ? This objection is countered on two grounds:-

First of all, the scriptural authorities prescribe 'maha-vishvasa' expressly as an 'anga' to Prapatti. Secondly, it is pointed out that there are different degrees of faith that result in different fruits. So, it is essential that one should have supreme faith at the time of performance of Prapatti.

It is further asked whether the Lord would accept one, if his faith is not in its full measure at the time of Prapatti ? The answer is in the affirmative. The Lord gradually strengthens his faith and perfects it. There may be variation in the degree of faith but as prescribed in the shastras, maha-vishvasa is a very necessary accessory to Prapatti. It is known from the following verse that there is variation in faith – 'यस्य यावांश्च विश्वासः तस्य सिद्धिश्च तावती । एतावानिति नैतस्य प्रभावः परिमीयते' ॥

C. It is questioned how Bhakti and Prapatti can give such opposite results, such as worldly prosperity and moksha, according to the desire of the aspirants. As one sows, so one reaps.

Desika points out that the shastras are the ultimate authorities in this behalf and it cannot be reasoned out otherwise. For a person interested in worldly gains, Bhakti and Prapatti become Pravritti Dharmas, and for a person who seeks the Holy Feet of the Lord alone, they become Nivritti Dharmas. These differences happen on account of the differences in the aspirants. It is thus established by the shastras that one can attain all kinds of aspirations through these means of Bhakti and Prapatti.

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Seeing that Prapatti done for some worldly benefit becoming unsuccessful, some people doubt in the efficacy of Prapatti, which is a means of attaining all benefits. They must be enlightened properly, says Desika, by pointing out their lapse in respect of the performance of Prapatti. There might have been the absence of the necessary accessories like 'maha-vishavasa' and others. There might have been 'kartru-vaigunya' of the form of absence of helplessness or 'akinchanya'. There might have been lapse of performance of Prapatti, according to the shastras on account of the absence of 'sadupadesha' from the Acharyas. It may be known that even worldly benefits are duly obtained if Prapatti is performed in the right way bereft of these lapses.

It is sometimes asked how Prapatti done only once can be the cause of the supreme benefit of attaining moksha, while savants like Vyasa have taught decidedly that the Lord should be constantly mediated upon.

अलोढ्य सर्वशास्त्राणि विचार्य च मुहुर्मुहुः
इदमेकं सुनिष्पन्नं ध्येयो नारायणस्सदा॥
'हरिरेकः सदा ध्येयः' 'स्मर्तव्यः सततं विष्णुः'

"Having gone deeply into all shastras and having thought over again and again, this one 'Truth' has been ascertained and that is that Sriman Narayana is to be meditated upon always"; "Sri Hari is to be meditated upon always by you"; "Vishnu should be remembered always". So should not we take that the charama shloka also as an accessory Prapatti for fulfilment of Bhakti Yoga, as it is found in 'मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते' which is clearly an 'anga Prapatti'.

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Desika points out that this also is not compatible, as Prapatti is enjoined as a main means (svatantra-prapatti) and as a substitute to Bhakti, as evidenced in the following authorities:-

'यद्येन कामकामेन न साध्यं साधनान्तरैः ।
मुमुक्षुणा यत् सांख्येन योगेन न च भक्तितः ॥
प्राप्यते परमं धाम यतो नावर्तते यतिः
तेन तेनाप्यते तत्तन्यासेनैव महामुने ॥
परमात्मा च तेनैव साध्यते पुरुषोत्तमः' ॥

"That which is not possible of being gained by other sadhanas, all that which is desired by one, is gained by nyasa. That which cannot be gained through Jnana-Yoga, Karma-Yoga or Bhakti-Yoga, can be gained by nyasa. The supreme abode of Paramatman also from where one will never more return to this world, is gained by nyasa alone. The Paramatman, the Purushottama, is also attained by nyasa alone."

'शरणं त्वां प्रपन्ना ये ध्यानयोगविवर्जिताः ।
तेऽपि मृत्युमतिक्रम्य यान्ति तद्वैष्णवं पदम्' ॥

"People who are without practice of 'Dhyana-yoga but who have surrendered unto you, even those people attain that Abode of Vishnu transcending rebirth.'

These authorities establish that Prapatti is an independent means to the attainment of moksha. One who is steadfast in this means will think of that Supreme Paramatman always as 'स्वतः प्राप्तम्' and there is no contradiction between Dhyana and Prapatti. Though

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Dhyana-Yoga with all its accessories is not within the competence of all, one is entitled to think of the Lord according to one's competence. So long as he is placed in this world, he should remember the Lord always as ordained in the Gadya by Ramanuja as 'ततश्च प्रत्यहं आत्मोज्जीवनाय एवमनुस्मरेत्' । The meditation in which a prapanna engages himself is not an upaya, but only the fruit of his Prapatti.

Thus, in this section, Desika has vindicated Prapatti as an independent and direct means to mukti, and has clearly established that both Bhakti-Yoga and Prapatti are valid means to the attainment of Paramatman, meant for two different kinds of aspirants.

Desika has written a work 'Nikshepa-Raksha' where he has raised nine objections against Prapatti and answered all of them clearly and established the validity of Prapatti.

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CHAPTER - XXV

Prabhava Vyavasthadhikara

The celebrated author of this treatise has expounded the doctrine of Prapatti along with all the accessories of it, in the first part comprising twenty two sections. In the two sections that follow the expositions of this doctrine, Desika has cleared all doubts that might arise regarding the siddhopaya and the sadhyopaya, and has established firmly the efficacy of this means, according to the scriptural authorities, and the continuing tradition of the Purvacharyas.

In this section, the author discusses about the eminence of those that adopt this means of spiritual perfection, and regulates the significance of this means by clearing the overtones and the undertones of this means. In this section - Prabhava Vyavasthadhikara – Desika regulates the exaggerated views about a Prapanna, and in the next section – Prabhava Rakshadhikara – Desika clears the views that under-estimate the greatness of this celebrated means. By this, the eminence of this means is expounded, as it exactly is, without either over-estimating or under-estimating it.

There are many statements that praise one who is solely devoted to Lord Vishnu. "The fathers shout in joy and the forefathers dance, saying – A Vaishnava is born in our line, and he will emancipate us." "Even gods cannot understand the greatness of a great person, who has supreme devotion towards the Lord."

Desika points out here that 'Jathi' or caste of a person is different from 'Kula' or a class, characterised by certain

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characteristics, and one should not be confused with the other. There is a statement –

न शूद्राः भगवद्भक्ताः विप्रा भागवताः स्मृताः

सर्ववर्णेषु ते शूद्राः ये ह्यभक्ताः जनार्दने।।

"The devotees of the Lord are not 'shudras'. They are known as 'bhagavathas'. Those of all castes, who are not devotees of Lord Vishnu, are 'shudras'. Here, the particular characteristics of devotion towards the Lord is considered to take one as belonging to the higher caste or belonging to a lower caste. On the basis of this, it is asked whether all devotees of the Lord, belong to the same caste ? All devotees, therefore, are to be considered as 'vipras' or brahmins. The answer to this question is – It is not so. Desika quotes the view of Kidambi Appullar, that the equality pointed out in the above statement, is on account of 'Parama-Purusha-Samya' and not in 'vyavahara'. All shastras ordain certain disciplines to be followed by 'Bhagavata Brahmana' and 'Bhagavata Shudra'. So, the statement that a 'Bhagavata Brahmana' and a 'Bhagavata Shudra' are equal, is on account of the same 'purushartha' being entertained by both, and not on account of the 'varna-ashrama-vyavahara-samya'. The statement of Thirumangai Alwar that 'Bhakti' endows 'Kula' – is also commented upon by the great master in the same way. If a person who is belonging to a low caste, and of an inferior character, gains 'Bhagavata Sambandham', one should not think of him as low, belonging to a particular caste or quality. The eminence of devotion towards the Lord, is such; but, they are not having marriage alliance with others, because it is regulated by caste, and praise and veneration are on account of the

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virtue of devotion to the Lord. Here, Desika emphasises that all devotees of the Lord, are of one class viz. Bhakta Kula but they belong to their respective castes. One's 'Kula' may change but the 'Jathi' or caste, does not change. Desika points out that even the Heavenly Cow – Surabhi – does belong to the class of a cow, and it will not change. The idea of the above verse is that Brahmins – who are bereft of devotion towards the Lord – are not to be regarded with respect. They must be treated as 'shudras'. Similarly, 'shudras' who are devotees of the Lord, should be praised like Brahmins."

Such statements, saying that an out-caste, who has pure character and devotion, should be known as 'Brahmin' and an ascetic who has fallen from his vows should be known as an out-caste; a person – whose head has grown grey – should not be considered as 'elder' but an youngster – who has gained knowledge should be considered as 'old', prescribing praise and censure, are meant for showing respect or otherwise. They should not be literally taken as such –

प्रतिपत्तिविशेषार्थं अन्यत्रान्यत्वकीर्तनम् ।

Mentioning in something, a quite different thing, such as "thinking of an out-caste in a fallen brahmin, fallen ascetic, etc," is for showing particular respect or not showing respect.

The instance of 'Vidura' is quoted sometime and Desika mentions that Vidura celebrated marriages according to his 'Jathi'. The qualities of Vidura are extolled by Krishna and the performance of obsequies or 'अन्त्येष्टि' by Dharmaraya, was on account of a special command – the 'ashariravani'- and it cannot be quoted as an instance of an admixture of

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castes. So, Desika concludes, that all castes are required to serve the Lord, according to their competency, without transgressing the code of conduct of their castes.

Desika cautions that it is not proper to argue on the basis of the unique characteristics and behaviour of Vidura and other great people, as well as the most celebrated Alwars of yore. The customs and behaviour that were prevalent in different yugas, cannot be taken as an example for our behaviour. Even when their behaviours are examined, it becomes clear that they did not transgress the regulations of their respective castes. They honoured the order of the 'Varna and Ashrama' Dharma, and never repudiated it. In the statement 'Knowledge should be gained from a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vysya or a Shudra' – the idea is that the knowledge of the Supreme Paramatman, ought to be obtained from these various people in the case of the non-availability of the foremost teachers; but, it is clearly mentioned that 'jnana-matram' or mere knowledge is to be gained from these, and not 'Brahmopadesham'.

It is pointed out that Vidura informed Dhrutharashtra that he was not competent to teach 'Brahma-Jnanam' as he was born in the fourth caste. Tuladhara and Dharma Vyadha, and others, duly enlightened the 'Brahmins' that approached them, regarding subtlety of 'Dharma'; but, they did not perform the duties of an 'Acharya'. They only guided them to proceed on the right lines.

There is this verse –

भक्तिरष्टविधा ह्येषा यस्मिन् म्लेच्छेऽपि वर्तते ।
तस्मैदेयं ततो ग्राह्यं सच पूज्यो यथा ह्यहम् ' ॥

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"in whomsoever these eight kinds of 'Bhakti' is found, even if he is a 'mlechha', to him should be given, and from him should be taken. 'He is to be worshipped even as myself.' Here, that which is to be given and taken is explained as knowledge, and not 'matrimonial alliance'. 'Pujyah' is a general term and it implies that they should be regarded with respect, as laid down in the shastras.

Desika decidedly states that one should recognise 'Bhagavata Prabhavam' without disturbing the order of varnas and ashramas. He quotes a verse in this behalf –

'वैष्णवत्वेन मान्यत्वं समानं मुनिसंमतम् ।
जात्यादिध्वंसतः साम्यं मुक्तकाले भविष्यति' ॥

"Equality and respectability in respect of being a devotee of Vishnu, are common and acceptable to sages; but, equality on account of destruction of the caste and others, does happen at the time of liberation."

Desika declares that though the regulations of the Varnashrama Dharma, and the order of behaviour, are binding upon all, there is no contradiction in showing respect and regard to all people who are 'Bhagavathas'. Those people, who have such kind of single devotion towards the Lord, and who have surrendered unto Him, should be treated with respect. The greatness of a person, who has surrendered unto the Lord, is described as follows :–

नारायणैकनिष्ठस्य या या वृत्तिः तदर्चनम् ।
यो यो जल्पः स स जपः तद्ध्यान यन्निरीक्षणम् ।
तत्पादांबु अतुलं तीर्थ तदुच्छिष्टं सुपावनम् ।
तदुक्तिमात्रं मन्त्र्याग्र्यं तत्स्पृष्टमखिलं शुचि ॥

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"The actions of a person, who is steadfast in Narayana, is the worship of the Lord. Whatever he utters, is the sacred 'japa'; whatever he witnesses is 'meditation'. The water, washing his feet, is sacred 'thirtha'; his leftovers are purificatory; the words, he utters are the foremost of 'mantras'; whatever he touches, becomes pure."

In these verses, there is a general and sweeping application, which are to be restricted. The 'vritti' of person devoted to the Lord, does not signify behaviour opposed to the shastras. Only such behaviour, which is not opposed to the shastras, should be taken as worship of the Lord. 'Yo-Yo-Jalpah' relates to the tattva, hita and Purushartha and not uncontrolled talk, harsh words and other such repugnant ones. The 'nirikshana' does not refer, to the witnessing of some prohibited objects; but, it signifies objects that are used for the worship of the Lord, and implies that they all appear as 'Brahmatmaka'. 'Pada-thirtha' is only to point out that the waters offered as worship to the feet of a 'Bhagavatha', that becomes celebrated. This does not mean any water that is casually touched by a 'Bhagavata'. The 'uchhista' or left-over has got a significant purpose. It may be food that may be remaining in the vessels used for cooking, and not the left-over on the leaves (or 'Bhojana-patra'). Only the 'uchhista' of the Acharyas, is here intended. For some expiations, the 'Bhojana-patra-uchhista' is prescribed.

'Thadukti-matram' signifies the statement of a great devotee, regarding the tattva, hita and purusharta, even in the local language, is to be received, reflected and practised; but, this does not refer to the worldly talk of no significance.

'Tat-sprstam-akhilam-shuchi' signifies the touch that is prescribed at the time of 'mantropadesha' or

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'vigrahapratishta' or touch prescribed for healing the disease, or touch that is prescribed according to the shastras; but, this does not signify the purification of things that are clearly prohibited.

Desika points out that if it is not regulated thus, it will be opposed to all shastras, and the practice of virtuous people, and it will lead one to great sin.

If this kind of regulation is not ordained, there will be contradiction to a number of shastras held valid by virtuous people, and also, it will be against the practice of the shastras. This kind of 'shastreeya-niyamana' or regulation of the shastras, is not violated even by the great masters like Sri Nathamuni, Sri Yamunamuni and Bhagavan Ramanuja. The regulations that are prescribed by the vaidika smritis and the vedas, are not to be abandoned, because, it will be 'thamasa-tyaga' as pointed out by the Gita. So, all Prapannas, and other well-meaning people, should engage themselves in these various duties with the reflection that they are devout servants to the Lord. These duties should be followed with the three kinds of 'tyaga' viz. Kartrutva, Sambandha and Phala. So, these duties are to be performed with the reflection that these are meant for only pleasing the Lord. One should not have the idea that moksha is the 'phala' of the performance of these duties; because, that is already realised by the grace of the Lord, when he entrusted earlier the responsibility of his protection to the Lord.

Desika describes here that the term 'parityajya' in the charma-shloka, does not prescribe the abandonment of all duties (dharmas); but, it is only an indication that one should not involve oneself in means that are not possible of performing by him. The statement – tyaja dharmam

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adharmam ca - means that one should give up the 'kamya-karma' and the prohibited deeds. the terms 'sathya' and 'anrita' in the statement "tyaja-satyanrite signifies that one should not aspire for 'atmanubhava' and ऐश्वर्यं, 'येनत्यजसितत् त्यज' signifies that one should reflect that the कर्तृत्व in tyaga, is also dependent upon the Paramatman. By all these, it is established that there is no reason at all for the transgression of the divine command.

Some are under the illusion that even the commitment of intentional sins, does not taint a Prapanna. This is quite improper. The sins committed intentionally, never go without tainting that person. So, to say, that intentional sins do not stick to him, is quite inappropriate.

Some have interpreted the statement – sarva–papebhyomokshaishyami – as releasing one from all sins, including intentional sins committed after 'Prapatti'.

This evidently shows that the intentional sins done after the Prapatti do cling to that doer. Even the Alwars have mentioned that one should desist from unbecoming deeds and sins. "We shall not do what ought not to be done, and we will not utter harsh and cruel words" – says Andal. "Whatever fault I committed in speech, may be excused and considered as a virtue" - says the Alwar. The gist of all this is, that there is a possibility of committing sins even after Prapatti, and that those sins taint the doer. That is why, a prayer has ensued to forgive them.

When such intentional sins occur, it is ordained that one should particularly pray to the Lord for forgiving those sins. The expiation of such sins is to perform a Prapatti for excusing these sins :–

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प्रायश्चित्तिरियं सात्र यत्पुनः शरणं व्रजेत्
पुनः प्रपद्यते नाथं अभिन्दन् लोकसंग्रहम् ।

From all these, it becomes established that there is a possibility of committing intentional sins, even after Prapatti. When such sins happen, one should repent and run to the Lord with a prayer to forgive those sins by performing a 'prayaschitha-prapatti'. It is ordained that non-intentional sins only, do not taint him.

The statement of Nammalwar 'my devotees do not do that (sin), and if they do, they have done well' – also proves that sins do taint one even after Prapatti. The statement "they have done well", means, we by ourselves will forgive those sins if they are non-intentional. If they have done it intentionally, and if they do not seek forgiveness, we will clear those sins by inflicting punishments on them. We will not give them up at any cost."

It cannot be said that the Lord will not think of punishing one, who has indulged in intentional sins.

It cannot be said that, "he will not be deprived of his object of attainment, even in case of not praying for forgiveness. There may be only absence of his affection."

This kind of argument is unsound. There is no greater loss, when one is deprived of the affection of the Lord. So, one will do well to observe some kind of expiation or other, of the form of praying excuse for one's faults, and performing surrender at the feet of the Lord. Even from the itihasas and puranams, this fact of praying excuse for the faults committed by one, is evident.

Desika concludes from all the above discussions that –

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1. Even for a Prapanna, there is possibility of intentional sins happening after Prapatti, on account of 'prarabdha-karma'.
2. In such case, one should repent and pray for forgiveness.
3. So long as a Prapanna is living in his body here, he has to follow the discipline prescribed for his varna and ashrama.
4. The Lord will necessarily take the Prapanna to His abode, purifying him after punishments, in case he does not pray for forgiveness.
5. The glory of a Prapanna should not be overestimated but should be explained according to the dictates of the shastras, and the practice of ancient masters.

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CHAPTER - XXVI

Prabhava Rakshadhikara

In the previous section, the glory of a Prapanna, and the greatness of the means of Prapatti, were regulated, and all overtones were set right. In this section, it is expounded that the eminence of this means of spiritual perfection, should not be under-estimated. By means of these two sections, the eminence of Prapatti is safeguarded and established, as it deserves.

It is declared that the 'sadhya-bhakti' or Prapatti, is capable of destroying even a large part of the sins that have commenced to yield the results –

साध्यभक्तिस्तु सा हन्त्री प्रारब्धस्यापि भूयसी

The idea of this statement is that, by the unique power of this means, even the 'prarabdha-karma' that has commenced to yield the results, would be destroyed according to the 'arthi' or intensive desire for being released from bondage on the part of the 'sadhaka' either in a moment or in a day or at the end of that life. A doubt may arise here. When a person has surrendered unto the Lord, should not the sorrows / causes of sorrow that are the results of some 'prarabdha karmas', also get destroyed ? Should not the Lord grant on his own accord, the subsidiary benefits such as 'Pankti Pavanatva' and others, even un-asked, to be experienced here ? As we see that this is not being experienced here, should we not take the statement 'Ma-Shuchah' only as an exaggerated praise of the means of Prapatti? If 'Ma-Shuchah' signifies the destruction of all

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sorrows, a person in this world, would not have been allowed to suffer sorrows and engage in causes that lead to sin. So, this statement is merely exaggerating the greatness of Prapatti.

The answer to this doubt is given as follows :–

In fact, the Lord wills to grant liberation to a person, even when he utters the sentence of surrender; but, according to the desire of the Prapanna, He places him in this world for sometime. If there would be no suffering of sorrow and others during the time, he would never gain 'vairagya' and his desire for earthly pleasures would not at all go. He would not develop intense desire for experience of the Lord. The Lord verily says that He is going to take away the wealth of a person, whom we wants to bless –

यस्यानुग्रहमिच्छामि तस्य वित्तं हराम्यहम् ।
बान्धवैश्च वियोगेन सदा भवति दुःखितः ।
तेन दुःखेन संतप्तः यदि मां न परित्यजेत् ।
तं प्रसादम् करिष्यामि ॥

"I take away the wealth of one, when I desire to bless; he will be sorrowing on account of separation from his relatives; being tormented by such sorrows, if he does not abandon Me, I shower on him My Grace."

From this, it becomes clear that the punishment that the Lord gives is verily grace showered on hard-hearted people for transforming them into intense devotees. Sorrows and others are verily beneficial in the sense that they will make him take a turn in life towards godliness. So, there is no exaggeration in the statement 'Ma-Shuchah'.

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There is a statement as follows :–

तं मातापितृहन्तारं अपि पाति भवार्तिहा ।

It is said that the Lord would absolve even such grave sinners such as the killer of one's father or mother. What does this signify ? The meaning of this verse should be followed properly. If this relates to the sins done prior to Prapatti, then there is no confusion; but, it cannot relate to the sinful deeds done after Prapatti. If such sins occur due to 'prarabdha-karma' after Prapatti, then he has to seek forgiveness and surrender unto the Lord for expiation of that sin. This has already been pointed out earlier; but, when such slight defects occur, such persons should not be slighted and dishonoured at any cost. Though they are afflicted by certain handicaps, they should be considered as virtuous only. If not, it leads to 'Bhagavata-Apachara'. 'यो ह्येनं पुरुषं वेद देवा अपि न तं विदुः' is a significant statement, which glorifies a Prapanna. The idea of this statement is that the eminence of a person who has the essential knowledge of Paramatman, cannot be measured even by the 'Nityasuris'. This eminence should not be underestimated. So, even in the event of some defects happening to Bhagavatas, they should not be treated indifferently. This amounts to 'bhagavata-apachara' and one should be very cautious in not committing this kind of sin against the devotees of the Lord.

From all these, it becomes established that –

1. those who are devoted to the Lord, are sure to attain moksha, even in the event of some faults happening to them, as they would be expiated by appropriate expiation or they would be cleared by the Lord, by inflicting mild punishments. There is no doubt at all

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regarding the attainment of moksha for those who have surrendered unto the Lord;

2. those Prapannas who are bereft of any defect whatsoever, gain moksha without delay;

3. the eminence of a Prapanna is so great that even in the case of certain defects happening to them, they should not be slighted;

4. If they are not treated with due respect it will lead to 'Bhagavata-Apachara.'

A number of quotations, as noted below, are quoted by some, and conclusions are drawn that though they are averse to the Lord, they would gain moksha, if they remember the names of the Lord, in whatever manner it may be:–

सांकेत्यं पारिहास्यं च स्तोभं हेलनमेव च ।

वैकुण्ठनाम ग्रहणं अशेषाघविनाशनम् ॥

Uttering the name of the Lord, either for some 'sanketha' or humiliation or justing or for any other purpose, would destroy all sins.

हरिर्हरति पापानि दुष्टचित्तैरपि स्मृतः

"Lord Hari is going to destroy all sins of one even if he is wicked, if His name is uttered." These and similar such statements are suggesting that the Holy Name of the Lord is purifying one, even though they are infected with sins. But, it does not mean that reciting the name of the Lord, for the very purpose of censuring the Lord, would cleanse him of all sins.

येद्विषन्ति महात्मानं न स्मरन्ति च केशवम् ।

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न तेषां पुण्यतीर्थेषु गतिः संसर्गिणामपि ॥

"Those who hate the Lord, and never remember Him with love, will not attain the highest object, even when they go to Holy places. The same fate for those who associate with them."

"It is sometimes asked whether one will get salvation by living in a Holy place, where the Lord is ever present. Will not even sinners attain moksha there?" It is said. But, it is the conclusion of the shastras that 'Bhagavath-Kshetra-Vasa' is helpful to only those, who are not haters of the Lord. Mere living in a Holy place, will not be the cause of salvation; but, it may influence one to follow the spiritual discipline such as bhakti or prapatti, and attain moksha. If not, even those who are behaving disagreeably to the Lord, will have to gain moksha by merely dwelling at 'Bhagavath Kshetra'. It may be possible that living in a Holy place may lead one, who is not engaged in activities opposed to shastras, to gain a clear vision and remember the Lord at the last moment. For 'Bhagavath-Pravanas' or those who are devoted to the Lord, living in a Holy place, may be helpful to get rid of their defects and attain the Lord.

The offences that are committed in Holy places, will be having very devastating effects. Even this, is on account of the greatness of the Lord. The 'anukulya' or being mostly agreeable to the Lord, would surely uplift an aspirant in some way or other, by getting rid of all faults, and the Lord would grant him his own abode, depending upon some pretext or other. If one is not devoted to the Lord, he cannot aspire to gain that Supreme benefit. So, one should be very cautious in one's thoughts, words and deeds.

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'रागादिदूषिते चित्ते नास्पदी मधुसूदनः।
न बध्नाति रतिं हंसः कदाचित् कर्दमांभसि' ॥

"The destroyer of the demon Madhu, the Supreme Lord, does not take resort in minds that are defiled by desire, passion, hatred and others. A swan will never take delight in marshy waters".

'कर्मणा मनसा वाचा यदभीक्ष्णं निषेवते ।
तदेवापहरत्येनं तस्मात् कल्याणमाचरेत्' ॥

What one indulges intensively through his mind, speech and actions, will itself overpower him. Therefore, one should always do only the good.

Thus, in this chapter, Desika has stoutly defended the greatness of Prapatti, and has expounded that a Prapanna should rest assured of the great benefit he would be getting after the fall of his body and that he should reflect upon the three Great Rahasyas, enshrining all the Supreme Truth.

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पदवाक्ययोजनाविभागः

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CHAPTER - XXVII

Mulamantradhikara

Having expounded the supreme truths that are to be imbibed by the genuine seekers of truth in the first twentyfour chapters of this treatise, Desika consolidated that teaching about the siddhopaya and sadhyopaya, and regulated the glory of Prapatti, in the second part of the work known as 'Sthirikarana Bhaga'.

The third part of this work is known as Pada-Vakya-Yojana – or explaining the significance of the terms and the several constructions of the terms as related to the three Rahasyas viz., the Mulamantra, Dvaya Mantra and the Charama Shloka. These three mantras illumine all the truths that have been expounded earlier in the twentysix chapters. These three chapters form in one way, the prime part or the main subject of this Great Work. The Mulamantra enlightens the essential nature of the jivatman, as being totally subservient to the Lord, and in that way develops a strong aspiration for attaining the Lord without delay. Thus, he will be having the 'adhikara' or qualification for performing the means of salvation.

The Dvaya Mantra teaches vividly the way of performing the spiritual discipline of Prapatti, for attainment of the supreme benefit of life viz., attainment of godhead.

The Charama Shloka is significant, as it prescribes the particular means of surrender for attainment of the desired object. All these truths can be seen in each one of these three

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mantras; but yet, every mantra significantly expounds a particular aspect prominently.

In the Mulamantra, the first letter of the first word i.e., 'अ', signifies the Supreme Reality, who is the protector. The middle word and the third word viz., 'नमः and नारायणाय' point out the upaya and upeya. All these three are made explicit in the Dvaya Mantra.

The particular qualification of the aspirant, suggested by the term 'prapadye' and the non-dependence of this means on any other means and the termination of all obstructions are illuminated in the Charama Shloka. These three viz., Mulamantra, Dvaya Mantra and the Charama Shloka, are the causes of Jnana, Anushtana and Phala respectively, and are by means of that, the Dharaka, the Bhogya and the Poshaka respectively.

The Mulamantra which is adorning the tongue of the preceptor, is going to dispel the darkness of ignorance in the cave of the heart of the disciple, and it causes the gain of his 'satta' or existence, by showing clearly the pure nature of the atman i.e., Para-sheshataika Rasa, or the essence of being of one nature of subservience unto the Lord. So, the Mulamantra is 'Dharaka'.

The Charama Shloka is the 'Poshaka' because it is the cause of enhancing the particular knowledge that results in the performance of the final means of surrender and which is the culmination of the instruction into the spiritual means fully.

The Dvaya Mantra is the 'Bhogya' because it is the cause of the attainment of the supreme object of life, even when it

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is uttered once. It makes one 'krithartha' when it is reflected upon always.

In the Mulamantra Adhikara, Desika expounds the profound meanings related to the nature of the supreme, and the individual self and the significance of entrusting the burden of his protection to the Lord elaborately. The greatness of the Mulamantra is also expounded.

Before taking up the exposition of the great Mulamantra, Desika has offered obeisance to the deity of the Mantra and the teacher of that Mantra and the Mantra itself in three verses. These three verses are also of the form of obeisance and Mangalacharana. It is said that one should have devotion towards the Mantra, and the particular deity propounded in the Mantra and also towards the preceptor, who kindly teaches that Mantra.

'मन्त्रे तद्देवतायां च तथा मन्त्रप्रदे गुरौ ।

त्रिषु भक्तिः सदा कार्या साहि प्रथम साधनम् ' ॥

First of all, the Mantra-Devata is propitiated in the following verses:–

'तारं पूर्वं तदनुहृदयं ~~तच्च नासक्षमाये~~-

त्याम्नायोक्तं पदमवयतां सार्थमाचार्यदत्तम् ।

अंगीकुर्वन् अलसमनसां आत्मरक्षाभरं नः

क्षिप्रं देवः क्षिपतु निखिलान् किंकरैश्वर्य विघ्नान् ' ।

"May He accept the burden of our protection, which has been offered to Him by us, who are utterly helpless and who are ever reflecting upon the Holy Mantra, which is adorned with the 'Pranava' first and the 'Namas' next and

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the term 'Narayana' in the third place, as propounded in the shruti and which has been endowed to us by the compassionate Acharya. May the Lord Sriman Narayana set at rest all the obstructions such as kama, avidya, karma-vasana, etc., that are obstructions to our offering of loving service to the Lord without delay i.e., at the end of this body."

As the Mantra is to be safeguarded at all costs, Sri Desika has used the word 'Tharam' which signifies 'Om'kara and 'Hridayam' which signifies 'namas' and then uses the word 'Narayana' as propounded in the sruti 'ओमित्यग्रे व्याहरेत् । नम इति पश्चात् । नारायणायेत्युपरिष्टात्' ।

Here a prayer is made for 'anishta- Nivritti', and through that a Mangalacharanam is also made. The term 'devah' used in this verse, signifies Sriman Narayana as the Mantra Devata.

The next verse expounds the eminence of the preceptor of the Mantra, who is the well-wisher of all humanity.

'कल्याणमावहतु कार्तयुगं स्वधर्मं
प्रख्यापयन् प्रणिहितेषु नरादिकेषु ।
आद्यं कमप्यधिगतो रथमष्टचक्रम्
बन्धुस्सतां बदरिकाश्रमतापसो नः'॥

"May that sage of Badrikashrama, Sriman Narayana, who taught vividly His–own Nivritti–Dharma of the Krita Yuga to those who were highly attentive, such as 'Nara' and others, and who has mounted upon the primeval and supreme chariot of eight wheels, and who is the dear-relative of the virtuous, grant us all good."

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The chariot mentioned here is the Mulamantra. The eight wheels are the eight letters. The person who has mounted upon that chariot is the supreme deity propounded in that Mantra. Sriman Narayana taught this supreme mantra to his own counterpart sage 'Nara' and 'Narada' and others. He is verily the Mantraprada or the Guru. He is prayed here to bestow all good to those who have surrendered themselves unto Him. It is suggested here that the Mantra was taught to those disciples, who fulfilled the qualifications of a disciple that is suggested by the word 'pranihiteshu'.

In the next verse, the greatness of the Mulamantra itself, is praised and a Mangalacharanam is made for the Mantra itself –

'यदन्तस्थं अशेषेण वाङ्मयम् वेदवैदिकम् ।
तस्मै व्यापकमुख्याय मन्त्राय महते नमः' ॥

"Obeisance unto that Great Mantra, which is the most celebrated of all 'Vyapaka' Mantras, and which is containing within itself totally, all expressions such as the Vedas, Smritis, Itihasas, Puranas and others." In this verse, the Mantra itself is praised. It is said

मन्तारं त्रायते यस्मात् मन्त्र इत्यभिधीयते ।

So, it is implied that this Mantra is capable of protecting all those who recite it with devotion. As all the objects of attainment or means of attainment that have been taught in the vast lore of Veda and the Smriti, Itihasa, Purana and others, are all included in this Mantra, this is said to be the 'Vyapaka Mukhya' i.e., the foremost of the three 'Vyapaka' Mantras viz., the Ashtakshari, the Vasudeva Dvadashakshari and the Vishnu Shadakshari.

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Having thus made the Mangalacharanam, Desika expounds the greatness of the Mulamantra, before explaining the profound meanings of the letters, words and sentences of this Great Mantra. A few of such statements may be quoted here:–

'मन्त्राणां परमो मन्त्रः', 'गुह्यानां गुह्यमुत्तमम्'

"This is the most supreme of all mantras". "This is to be highly guarded of all mantras to be guarded". This primeval Mantra, is most purifying of all purifying Mantras. This is the essence of all Vedas. This is capable of averting all undesirable things. This is the means of attainment of all purusharthas. This is helpful to all means. This is possible of being adopted by all varnas according to their competency in the Vedic or Tantric forms. It is enshrining in itself, all truths that are primary and secondary. It does not require any other Mantra, to make it powerful. It is common to all forms of the Lord. All Acharyas and Alwars have adopted this Holy Mantra commonly, and glorified it. The sages of yore have obtained realisation through this Mantra.

बहवो हि महात्मानः मुनयः सनकादयः ।

अष्टाक्षरं समाश्रित्य ते जग्मुः वैष्णवं पदम् ॥

Many of the Great Sages like Sanaka and others adopted this Mantra and attained the abode of Lord Vishnu.

यथा सर्वेषु देवेषु नास्तिनारायणात्परः ।

तथा सर्वेषु मन्त्रेषु नास्ति चाष्टाक्षरात्परः ॥

As there is no one higher than Narayana amongst the gods, there is no Mantra greater than this amongst all Mantras.

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'आसीना वा शयाना वा तिष्ठन्तो यत्र कुत्र वा ।
नमो नारायणायेति मन्त्रैकशरणा वयम्' ॥

While sitting, sleeping or standing, or wherever we may be, we are taking resort in the one Supreme Mantra as 'Namo Narayanaya'.

It is described that Pundarika was instructed into this Supreme Mantra by Narada, according to the command of the Lord, and that dharmatma, who was Narayana-Parayana, solely devoted to this Mantra, attained the supreme abode of the Lord. The glory of this Mantra can be known from the fact that the Lord Himself taught this Mantra to Sri Tirumangai Alwar.

When this Mantra is adopted without 'Pranava', and the 'dative case', it becomes 'sarvadhikara' or adoptable by all people without caste or colour.

There are a number of references in the Tamil Prabhandams, where 'pranava' and 'dative case' are not used. For people of the higher castes, it is to be adopted with 'pranava' and 'dative case'. When this Mantra is without 'pranava', it is called as 'Tantrika' or Mantra prescribed in the Agamas. Even in such case, one may count the eight letters. All the meanings signified by the 'pranava' are to be reflected in the letter 'अं' which is used as a substitute to 'pranava'.

The meanings that are enshrined in 'pranava' are very many, and 'pranava' is used for offering the atman unto the Paramatman.

'हविर्गृहीत्वात्मरूपं वसुरण्येति मन्त्रतः ।
जुहुयात्प्रणवेनाग्नौ अच्युताख्ये सनातने' ॥

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Holding up the oblation of the form of the atman, one should oblate that in the holy fire of the form of the primeval Achyuta, using 'pranava' and 'vasuranya mantra'. In this context, it may be seen that pranava is independently used for offering of the atman to the Lord. According to this, even in the exposition of Mulamantra, 'pranava' is interpreted as signifying 'samarpana' or offering of the atman. Some masters explain this as expounding 'swarupa jnana' or knowledge of the essential nature of the atman, and so, they teach that it is meant for gaining 'sheshatvanusandhana matra' or the reflection of the subservience of the atman to the Paramatman.

When 'pranava' is used independently and when in itself becomes a mantra, then various meanings are known according to the variations of – एकमात्र, द्विमात्र, त्रिमात्र and सार्धत्रिमात्र ।

'एकमात्रप्रणव' or Pranava of one syllable, signifies Paramatman having the Prithvi as his body ('karya'). The Pranava of two matras signifies Paramatman having the Antariksha as his body (the 'karya rupa') and the Pranava of three matras signifies Paramatman having the 'कार्यरूप स्वर्लोक ' as his body and 'सार्धत्रिमात्रप्रणव' signifies Paramatman of the causal state and those who meditate upon 'Pranava' like this gain those respective worlds.

It may be said that 'sheshatvanusandhana' is gained from 'pranava' and it will be fulfilling the competence of the jivatman for becoming an aspirant –

क्षेत्रज्ञस्य ईश्वरज्ञानात् विशुद्धिः परमा मता ।

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By the knowledge of Ishvara, it is opined that the jivatman or Kshetragna becomes supremely purified. If this pertains to mere Tattvajnana of the sheshin or Paramatman then it will result in termination of अनर्हता or unfitness for upasana. If it signifies उपायान्तरज्ञान or different knowledge of the उपायं it is related to Moksha. This is illustrated in the statement of शांडिल्य -'ईदृशः परमात्मायं प्रत्यगात्मा तथेदृशः। तत्संबन्धानुसंधानं इति योगः प्रकीर्तितः ॥

Now, we may try to understand the profound meanings of the terms of this Mulamantra, as propounded by the shastras.

The three letters of the 'Pranava' are said to be the essence of the three Vedas. The first letter of the 'Pranava', which happens to be the first word of 'Ashtakshara Mantra', signifies Paramatman, who is the ground of everything other than Himself.

अकारेण अखिलाधारः परमात्माभिधीयते ।

अकार is the source of all speech and Brahman is the cause of all objects of this world. Naturally, the first letter of the Pranava, which is the cause of all words or 'सर्ववाचकजात' signifies Sriman Narayana, who is the cause of all objects 'वाच्यजातप्रकृति'। This term is signifying the Supreme Paramatman who is the material and instrumental cause of this universe and who is characterised by the host of auspicious qualities such as सर्वज्ञत्व, सर्वशक्तित्व and others.

'अकारो विष्णुवाचकः', 'अ इति भगवतो नारायणस्य प्रथमाभिधानम्' ।

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This letter अ is derived from 'अव रक्षणे' and therefore signifies the सर्वरक्षकत्व of Paramatman. Though many meanings are possible for the root 'अव' the fact of 'Rakshakatva' is desired to be reflected upon, as it is required here prominently. As there is no limitation to this rakshakatva, it is related to one and all. The modes of protection are very many according to the difference in the seekers of protection. Though rakshakatva is non-conditional (निरुपाधिक), in respect of those samsarins who have transgressed the Divine Command, the Supreme Lord expects some pretext to be done on the part of the jivas to be saved. Though the Lord's rakshakatva is natural to all, it is obstructed on account of the condition of punishment in respect of people who have committed transgression of Divine Command from beginningless time. To get rid of such displeasure of the Lord, the pretexts of Bhakti and Prapatti have been prescribed in the shastras. It is rightly said that "it is appropriate that the Supreme Lord, who is the Master of all, is to be the saviour of mankind; Sharanagati and others are helping factors. The all-independent-grace of the Lord, happens to be the prime cause of liberation."

त्राणे स्वामित्वमौचित्यं न्यासाद्याः सहकारिणः ।

प्रधानहेतुः स्वातन्त्र्यविशिष्टा करुणा विभोः ॥

According to the authorities like,

'तदन्तर्भावात् त्वाम् न पृथगभिधत्ते श्रुतिरपि', 'लक्ष्म्या सह हृषीकेशः देव्या कारुण्यरूपया । रक्षकः सर्वसिद्धान्ते वेदान्तेषु च गीयते ॥'

The Lord is ever associated with the compassionate

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Goddess Mahalakshmi, and He happens to be the protector along with Sri Mahalakshmi. So, in 'अकार of the 'Pranava', one should reflect Sriman Narayana, necessarily united with Sri Mahalakshmi. Similarly, even in the term 'Narayana' in this Mulamantra, one should reflect upon the Lord, as associated with Mahalakshmi. In the first letter 'अ' of the 'Pranava', the dative case ending 'आय' is dropped, because it signifies the person to whom the atman is verily offered. The construction that is taken by others that the first and the third letters of the 'Pranava' that signify Paramatman and Jivatman respectively, are in the nominative case, and thus oneness is to be signified between them, is opposed to many authorities. This is very explicit in the Mantra of the Mundakopanishat, which expounds that one should have the pranava as the bow and the atman as the arrow and Brahman as the target. This establishes that the two are quite different and distinct.

The letter 'म' signifies the jivatma who is ever subservient to the Lord. The middle letter 'उ' is taken to signify Goddess Lakshmi and in that case the jivatman is to be known as subservient or shesha to both of them. This atman is, therefore, described as subservient or 'sheshabhuta' to both the Lord and His consort.

If the middle letter is taken in the sense of 'avadharana' or emphasis, it becomes significant that the jivatman is subservient to only Paramatman and not to any other person and as it has already been made clear, the jivatman is never subservient to other deities and devotees of other deities. This 'Bhagavat-Sheshatva' extends upto the 'sheshatva' of the 'Bhagavatas', as it is the desire of the Supreme Paramatman.

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The third letter 'म' signifies the jivatman and through him, all things that are subservient to the Lord. 'मकारं जीवभूतं तु' points out that 'मकार' signifies the jivatman who is different and distinct from the non-sentient entities on the one hand and on the other hand the Supreme Paramatman, who happens to be the twentysixth entity and who is signified as the cause of everything else, and the redeemer of all by the first letter.

The 'मकार' and the term 'नार' in the Mulamantra signify only the visheshanas and not the Supreme Paramatman characterised by them by the 'Nishkarsha vivaksha' or restricting the connotation. The jivatman is of the essential nature of consciousness, and has consciousness as his attribute also and he has also 'Ananda' as his attribute. He is totally subservient to the Supreme Paramatman, and in his essential nature, he is supremely pure. As the jivatmans are infinite, the term 'म' in the Mulamantra, signifies the class (jati vachana). As he has to realise sheshatva jnanam, or awareness of subservience, and termination of 'svatantrabhimana', some masters take the term 'अहम्' to be understood along with letter 'म'. It is pointed out by some that the letter 'म' itself signifies 'अहं' also. As the third letter has to signify the oblation of the form of the 'pratyagatman' – to be offered to the Lord – it is appropriate to take the term 'अहं' as the sense of the letter 'म'. Sri Parashara Bhattar has, therefore, explained 'मकार' as 'अकारार्थायैव स्वमहं' ।

The middle term of the Mula Mantra is 'Namas'. This term 'Namas' signifies surrender or 'Sharana-Varanam'. As

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prayer for protection and entrusting the essential nature and the fruit of protection go together, the terms that prescribe surrender imply 'Atma Samarpana' and 'Sharana-Varana'. The usage of this term in Mahabharata – 'नमश्चक्रुः जनार्दनं' – for 'sharanagati' makes this point clear. The fact that 'Namas' signifies 'Atma–Samarpanam' is evident in the statement 'नमस्कारात्मकं यस्मै विधायात्मनिवेदनम्' i.e., surrendering oneself is of the form of 'namaskara'.

In the term 'Namas', the meanings such as – 'I am not the saviour of myself; all activities that are called mine, are not subservient to me; all these are subservient only to the Supreme Lord" – are signified.

The 'Ahirbudniya Samhitha' expounds three significant meanings to this term 'Namaha'. They are known as 'Sthula', 'Sukshma' and 'Para'. The 'sthulartha' of 'Namas' is performance of self-surrender, accompanied with the five accessories to the Lord:–

भगवान् मे परो नित्यं अहं प्रत्यवरः सदा ।
इति भावो नमः प्रोक्तः नमसः कारणं हि सः ॥
नामयत्यपि वा देवं प्रह्वीभावयति ध्रुवम् ।
प्रह्वीभवति नीचे हि परो नैच्यं विलोकयन् ॥
अतो वा नम उद्दिष्टं यत्तन्नामयति स्वयम् ।

The Supreme Paramatman is the 'seshin' and I am ever the lowest of the low – the 'shesha-bhuta'. The reflection of the 'Sesha-Seshi-Bhava' is said to be 'Namas'. This reflection of 'sheshatva' is verily the cause of surrender. So, the reflection of the 'Sesha-Sheshi-Bhava' is the meaning of the term 'Namas'.

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This means makes the Lord condescend, or make him yield to one who is below. The most supreme 'Paramatman' seeing the humility of the 'sesha' – the jivatman – becomes well disposed towards the person who surrenders unto Him. According to this interpretation, the meaning of the term is to be taken as 'sharanagati'.

The Ahirbudniya Samhita describes the various accessories of 'sharanagati', and expounds that the 'sthulartha' of 'Namas' is performance of surrender:–

पूर्णमन्त्रैः उपायैश्च नमनं ते प्रकीर्तितम् ।

स्थूलोऽयं नमसस्त्वर्थः सूक्ष्ममन्यन्निशामय ॥

The Atma-Nikshepa – or the surrender of the atman to be protected, with all the accessories prescribed for that – is the gross meaning of the term 'Namas'.

The subtle meaning – or sukshmarta of 'Namas' – is the abnegation of 'mamatha' or the feeling of the 'I' and 'Mine'. Here 'Mamyam' or 'Mamakara' and 'Ahankara' are to be discarded. That is said to be the meaning of 'Namas':–

'चेतनस्य यदा मम्यं स्वस्मिन् स्वीये च वस्तुनि ।

मम इत्यक्षरद्वन्द्वम् तदा मम्यस्य वाचकम् ॥

अनादिवासनारूढमिथ्याज्ञाननिबन्धना ।

अत्मात्मीयपदार्थस्था या स्वातन्त्र्यस्वता मतिः ॥

मेनेत्येवं समीचीन बुद्ध्या सात्र निवार्यते ।

नाहं मम स्वतन्त्रोऽहं नास्मीत्यस्यार्थ उच्यते ॥

न मे देहादिकं वस्तु स शेषः परमात्मनः

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नम इत्येतया वाचा नन्त्रा स्वस्मादपोह्यते ।

इति ते सूक्ष्म उद्दिष्टः परमन्यन्निशामय' ॥

"When a chetana or jiva has 'mamakara' and 'ahankara' in him, and in things that belong to him, then the word 'mama' of two letters, is indicating 'mamyam'. This kind of thought in himself and in the objects that belong to him, is on account of wrong knowledge that is superimposed on him on account of beginningless 'vasana' or reminiscent impressions. That wrong knowledge is terminated here by the right understanding such as 'they are not mine; I am not belonging to me; I am not independent; the body and others are not mine; they are all subservient to Paramatman."

By this understanding, all the perverse thoughts of the form of 'I and Mine', get terminated. This is the meaning of the term 'Namas'.

The wrong knowledge of the form of independent existence and existence of one's own self, gets terminated, when one realises that all objects in this world are subservient to the Lord, as He happens to be 'inner-self' in all.

The term 'Namaha' itself is going to dispel all kinds of misapprehensions of the form of 'mamakara' and 'ahankara' by means of its significant connotation. This is the subtle meaning of the term 'नमः'।

This term 'Namaha' has another meaning which is known as 'para' or the most-supreme:–

पन्था नकार उद्दिष्टो मः प्रधान उदीर्यते ।

विसर्गः परमेशस्तु तत्रार्थोऽयं निरुच्यते ॥

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'अनादिः परमेशोऽयं शक्तिमान् पुरुषोत्तमः ।
तत्प्राप्तये प्रधानोऽयं पन्था नमननामवान् ' ॥

The 'Na'-kara signifies the 'path'; 'mah' means 'prime'; the 'visarga' signifies 'Paramatman'. When all these are taken together, it amounts to this – The primeval Supreme Lord who is omnipotent and Purushothama, is the Prime Pathway to His attainment, and is so signified as 'Namah'.

It may be asked why the term 'Narayana' is to be repeated here, as it is declared that the 'Parama-Sheshin' alone is to be sought as in 'नन्तव्यः परमः शेषी '। Though it is quite evident, to enlighten that such a one is the 'Parama-Sheshin', the term 'Narayanaya' is used specifically.

'The glory of the name Narayana' – this term 'Narayana' clearly shows both the tattvas viz., the 'shesha' and the 'sheshi'. So it is establishing the name of the particular deity to be meditated upon in all Brahmavidyas as 'Narayana'. The 'Narayana Anuvaka' of the Maha Narayana Upanishat, has declared that 'Brahma, Shiva and other such deities, are all the 'vibhuties' of Narayana, as they are all included in the group of 'Naras'. The statement – "reciting the mere name 'Narayana', people get rid of all sorrows and gain happiness" – signifies the celebrity of this name. The Alwars glorify this Holy Name of the Lord Narayana – in their compositions. Those people who merely utter this Holy Name 'Narayana', will be freed from disease, afflictions and sorrows and there is no doubt in this. The term Narayana itself, is counted as having eight letters – when the vowels and consonants are counted separately. The term 'Narayana' is signifying the Supreme, who is of the form of all auspiciousness, divested of all that is defiling, and which is having 'ubhaya-lingatva'

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and 'ubhaya-vibhuti' yogatva. "Creating waters, I am residing in waters, and so, my name is known as Narayana" –

'सृष्ट्वा नारं तोयमन्तस्थितोऽहं येन स्यान्मे नाम नारायणेति ;
आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ताः आपो वै नरसूनवः ।
ता यदस्यायनं पूर्वं तेन नारायणः स्मृतः' ॥

Waters are called 'Nārāh', and it is the creation of the Lord. Those waters were the abode of this Lord before. So, He is called 'Narayana'. This term 'Narayana' signifies that Narayana is the primeval cause of this universe. 'Nārāni' means all entities are born of 'Nara' or Paramatman –

'नराज्जातानि तत्त्वानि नाराणि इति ततो विदुः ।
तान्येव चायनं तस्य तेन नारायणः स्मृतः' ॥

Those tattvas themselves are the abode of that Supreme and therefore, He is called 'Narayana'–

From this, it is understood that –

1. Narayana is the cause of all entities in this universe, inclusive of Brahma, Shiva and others, and has pervaded all those entities from within and without.
2. The term 'Ayana' signifies that He is all pervasive – (sarva-vyapaka and also Niratishaya-sukshma). As the term 'Narayana' signifies that He is one goal of all humanity, He is also known as the one means of the attainment of Himself. The term 'Nāra' signifies the multitudes of all beings. As this Lord is the 'gati' – or the object of attainment – and 'alambana' – or the means of attainment – He is well known as 'Narayana' –

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नारस्त्विति सर्वपुंसां समूहः परिकीर्तितः ।
गतिरालम्बनं तस्य तेन नारायणः स्मृतः ॥

Therefore, Narayana is declared by the Vedas, and the knowers of the Veda, as the near-relative (mother, father, preceptor, abode and refuge) of all beings in this universe.

The term 'Narayana' signifies that He is having under his rule the essential nature, existence and functioning of all the three kinds of sentients and non-sentients.'

The letter 'र' signifies the non-sentient entity that is subjected to mutation. The letter 'न' which is prefixed before 'र' to form 'Nara', signifies the chetana, which is not subjected to change in his essential nature. The word 'नार' signifies the multitudes of 'Naras' or sentient principles. The Lord is the 'Ayana' to these multitudes of 'Naras'. By this term 'ayana', the Supreme Lord, to whom the 'svarupa', 'sthithi' and functioning of the three kinds of sentients and non-sentients are subordinated, and who is the cause of all these entities, and who happens to be the Supreme Object of attainment by virtue of His most blissful nature – is signified. This signifies that the Lord is the ground or support of all the three worlds, as pointed out in 'विष्ण्वाधारं यथा चैतत् त्रैलोक्यं समवस्थितं' । The word 'ayana' points out – according to different derivations from the roots 'ईयते अनेन', 'ईयते असौ' and 'ईयते अस्मिन्' that He is the 'upaya', 'upeya' and 'adhara' – the means of attainment, the goal and the support respectively. The supremacy and accessibility that are helpful for 'upeyatva' and 'upayatva' are to be understood here. By the derivation of the term 'Narayana' through

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'बहुव्रीहि' compound as 'नाराः अयनं यस्य सः, the 'antharvyapti' or internal pervasion is known, whereas through 'तत्पुरुष' compound as 'नाराणां अयनं', 'bahir-vyapti' or external pervasion is known. To pervade an entity wherever it is – so that it cannot be said that, it is not there – is internal pervasion. External pervasion is, to be even in all places, where an entity is not.

The letter 'अ' in pranava, and the term 'Nara' and 'ayana' in the term 'Narayana', serve different purposes of pointing out 'rakshakatva', 'karanatva' and 'nityatva' and 'netrutva' and 'upayatva' and upeyatva' respectively. Though Paramatman is characterised by all other entities, and though He is all pervasive, He is not tainted with the defects of those entities on account of His essential nature of 'apahatapapmatva' or being opposed to all that is defiling.

This Mantra, thus establishes that Paramatman is different and distinct from the other two entities on account of the fact of this pervasion, and His being the support and Master of every other entity.

न रिष्यति च सर्वत्र नरस्तस्मात्सनातनः ।
नरसम्बन्धिनस्सर्वे चेतनाचेतनात्मकाः ॥
ईशितव्यतया नारा धार्यपोष्यतया तथा ।
नियाम्यत्वेन सृज्यत्व प्रवेशभरणैस्तथा ॥
अयते निखिलान् नारान् व्याप्नोति क्रियया तथा ।
नाराश्चाप्यायनं तस्य तैस्तद्भावनिरूपणात् ॥
नाराणामयनं वासस्ते च तस्यायनं सदा ।
परमा च गतिस्तेषां नाराणामात्मनां सदा ॥

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As He is never decaying, the primeval Paramatman is designated as 'Narah' (नरः). The sentients and non-sentients that are inseparably related to 'Nara', the Lord, are called 'Narah' (नाराः). The relationship between Him and the other entities is as follows –

They are ever subservient to Him depending upon Him for their very essential nature;

They are depending upon His will for their functions, being created by Him, being ensouled by Him, being ruled over by Him and being supported by Him.

The Paramatman rules over all others, pervades them through the acts of pervasion, controlling and supporting. The sentients and non-sentients are the ज्ञानसाधन means of jnana, because through the 'nārāh', the existence of Brahman is pointed out. He is the 'vasasthana' or abode of the chetanas and achetanas. Those chetanas and achetanas are ever pervaded by Him. He is the 'gathi' or the object of attainment for those naras or atmans.

Thus, by the term Narayana, the Supreme Paramatman, the internal ruler in all entities, the one who is related in all ways as the mother, father, teacher, brother and others, the most Supreme Ishvara is expounded. He is the one natural relative of all – a 'Nirupadhika-Bandhu'.

The dative case in the term Narayana is declared by Desika as a prime part which is the cause of the attainment of the fruit, in the Mula Mantra. According to the various constructions of the 'phala-prarthana' or prayer for the supreme object of attainment, happens to be in this dative case. The 'sampradana' or the dative signifies the master of

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the object to whom that is being given - 'दीयमानार्थ शेषित्वं संप्रदानत्वमिष्यते' ।

Though in this context, the offering of the atman to the Lord, as an object to be saved by Him, is the meaning of the dative case, an object that is subservient to the Lord alone, is being offered to Him to be protected by Him alone. It is not something belonging to one, offered to another for protection. To whom this offering is made, if it is asked, it is said to the Great Lord, Maha Vishnu.

तत् कस्मा इत्यपेक्षायां विष्णवे स इतीर्यते ।

So, the meaning of the dative, is explained here. This is applicable to the dative case of the term 'Narayana', in the Mula Mantra also. The meanings of the seven letters in the Mula Mantra, beginning with 'Na-kara' have been explained in the Mantra Smritis and Desika quotes them in this context.

Like this, from a detailed study of the derivation of the meanings of the term and letters of this Mula Mantra, it becomes established very clearly that the mirror of the form of the Mula Mantra, reflects clearly the essential nature of the Paramatman, as well as the jivatman, that are difficult to understand otherwise.

Desika has elaborately expounded the essential nature of the Paramatman, that is explicit and implicit in the Mula Mantra. He counts in all 108 auspicious qualities, and in the end summarises in one verse the supreme nature of Paramatman as follows:–

इह संग्रहतः श्रीमान् गोप्ता शेषी समाधिकदरिद्रः ।
शरणं सर्वशरीरी प्राप्यस्सेव्यश्च साधुभिर्भाव्यः ॥

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In this Mula Mantra, the protector who is associated with Goddess Maha Lakshmi (akārārtha – the meaning of अकार) the Sheshi, who is not having anyone equal to Him and greater to Him (the meaning of the dative dropped in अकार), the protector of all (the meaning of Namas), the one who has all other entities as his body (the meaning of Narayana), and who is the ultimate object of attainment and who is the one that is to be served by all (the meaning of आय), is to be reflected upon by all virtuous people.

Likewise, the characteristics of the jivatman as reflected in the Mula Mantra, have been counted and described as suggested in the Mula Mantra. Desika concludes this exposition, summing up the supreme significance of the Mula Mantra, in the following verse:–

पदत्रयेऽत्र संक्षेपात् भाव्यानन्यार्हशेषता ।

अनन्योपायता स्वस्य तथानन्यप्रयोजनता ॥

In the three words of this Mula Mantra, what are necessarily to be reflected upon are –

1. subservience to Him alone and not to any other (the meaning of Pranava)
2. the means of attainment being the Lord alone and none other (the meaning of Namah) and
3. the object of attainment being the Lord alone and none else (the meaning of Narayanaya).

Thus, Desika has expounded the significance of the Mula Mantra as mentioned in the statement 'सर्वं अष्टाक्षरान्तस्थम्'।

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This supreme Mantra, establishes conclusively –

1. the essential nature of the three entities – the sentient, the non-sentient and Ishvara distinctively, and establishes their differences from one another;
2. the mutual difference and distinction between one jiva and another jiva;
3. the natural difference between Ishvara and the jivatman on account of the shesha-sheshi bhava;
4. that the particular deity Sriman Narayana alone is the material cause and instrumental cause of this universe.

When one lives in the company of those people, who are reflecting over the supreme meanings of this eminent Mantra as stated above, no doubt arises about the nature of the Supreme as well as the nature of the jivatman.

How are the three terms of this great Mantra, to be related with one another to form a whole sentence? Are the three terms suggesting a single sentence or are they forming two sentences or are they to be taken as three sentences?

Desika points out that they signify particular meanings when they are studied in these forms. While the three terms are taken to form one sentence, then the order of the meanings is as follows:–

प्रणवप्रतिपाद्यस्वभावविशिष्टाय नारायणाय नमः

According to this, the pranava becomes another name of the Supreme Paramatman. This will be emphasising the 'upaya' or the means of realisation (upaya-param). The other two viz., svarupa and purusharta, should be taken as included in 'upaya'. This is taken to signify by some masters,

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as 'shesha-vritti-para' i.e., the function of subservience by the body and speech, as pointed out in 'बद्धांजलिपुटा हृष्टा नम इत्येव वादिनः'।

Here the first part of folding the hands relates to body – 'kayaka-shesha-vritti' – and the second part relates to 'vachika-shesha-vritti'. This kind of service by virtue of subservience happens through the reflection of one's essential nature. For making explicit all these meanings of 'upayatva' and 'shesha-vrittitva', this Mantra, is reflected as two sentences:–

1. I am by nature subservient to Him, who is characterised by अकार and the term Narayana and who is having the qualities of rakshakatva and sarvādhāratva
2. I am not for myself; I am not the natural master of anything; I am not by myself independent.

It may be emphasised a follows:–

I am subservient to Narayana alone, who is signified by अकार From this, it becomes established that the one cause of all, is no other deity than Narayana.

For Mantras, the order of words or 'Pada-krama' is decided according to tradition. But, according to the meanings, the relationship of the words may be explained. If two sentences are understood in this Mantra, then it will signify totally the svarupa. That is why, it is pointed out by the masters, that one is born in the Tirumantra. When one realises that he is subservient to none other, i.e., not dependent on any other person, he will surrender to Him alone, for attaining Him alone as the supreme object. Thus, he becomes established in the means and 'prayojana'.

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It is explained by masters that the Mula Mantra is signifying self-surrender with all the accessories (सपरिकरात्मसमर्पणम्)

According to this interpretation, the मकार in pranava, will have to be taken in the nominative case. The meaning will be like this:–

This oblation of the atman which is by nature subservient to the Paramatman, is offered for being protected, to Narayana alone, who is the 'sheshin' by nature and who is designated by the letter अकार. Then, the term नमः will sever the relationship with himself and means that the burden of protection is not for me. This is as prescribed in oblations performed with the mantra 'इदमिन्द्राय न मम'. Here, it is ordained that it is related to Paramatman and one's own relationship is negated. (परसम्बन्धविधि, स्वसंबन्ध निषेध)

In this interpretation, both the sentences serve definite purposes. The burden of protection is not entrusted to any one different from Him and it is not a burden on me also.

This fact of Mula Mantra, signifying 'atma-nivedana' is declared by Bhagavan Ramanuja, in his Nitya Grantha, as मूलमन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं देवाय निवेद्य । Even in Vaikuntha Gadya, Ramanuja says – 'श्रीमता मूलमन्त्रेण मां ऐकान्तिकात्यन्तिक परिचर्याकरणाय परिगृह्णीष्वेति याचमानः प्रणम्य आत्मानं भगवते निवेदयेत्'।

If it is observed that there is no word for praying as such in the Mula Mantra, Desika points out that the verb

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'स्यां' may be understood in respect of each of the two sentences. Then it will be – 'ओं नारायणाय स्याम्' । 'नमः स्याम्'।

This kind of interpretation will be similar to the interpretation of the second khanda or part of the Dvaya Mantra, where there is a prayer for 'ishta-prapti' and 'anishta-nivritti'. In this interpretation, the reflection upon one's svarupa is included.

When this Mula Mantra is interpreted as having three sentences, svarupa and purusharta will be explicit and the 'upaya' will be understood. If two of the three viz., svarupa, upaya and purushartha, are taken as explicit, the other one will be implicit in it. The svarupa, upaya and purushartha are literally meant by the terms of the Mula Mantra. The 'pranava' and 'namas' expound svarupa. The third letter, and the dative case dropped in अकार of 'pranava', will be signifying the prayer for purushartha with the term 'स्याम्' being understood. Even here, Narayana inseparably associated with Goddess Lakshmi is signified. The prayer that is submitted to the Lord here is 'नित्य किंकरता' or loving service to the Divine for all time to come. This kind of divine service may be mentioned in terms of Ishvara as also in terms of the Prapanna. It may be mentioned like this–

"I should obtain kainkarya, which will delight you", or it may be said, "you must delight by making me your kinkara".

The prayojana or benefit is clearly established for both here. This kind of 'kainkarya-prapti' is the ultimate end of life. This 'kainkaryam' or divine service is not in conflict with the equality the jiva gains in enjoyment of bliss and

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attainment of knowledge with the supreme, in the state of liberation. Because, 'kainkaryam' is the fruit of seshatva which is the essential nature of the jiva. The subservience to the Lord or 'भगवच्छेषत्व' is declared in the pranava and is reflected in the namas, where utter dependence upon the Lord and the fact of existence only for the sake of the Lord, are suggested, will culminate in eternal service to the Supreme Paramatman mentioned as 'Narayanaya'. This 'भगवत् कैंकर्यं' extends further to भागवत कैंकर्यं which is the culmination of the attainment of the object of life. This kind of 'kainkarya' is the cause of the infinite bliss and not the cause of sorrow that results out of servitude to the ungodly ones.

In this sacred Mantra, it is explained that the three terms themselves signify svarupa, upaya and purushartha. The pranava signifies the svarupa; the namas the upaya and the rest of the Mula Mantra, is expounding the prayer for purushartha. This interpretation is similar to the exposition of tattva, upaya and purusharta in Vedanta Sutras. The first two chapters of Vedanta Sutras deal with the Supreme Reality, and the subordinate realities. The third chapter expounds the upaya or the means of liberation, along with its accessories. The fourth chapter expounds the 'phala' or the ultimate object of attainment. The essential nature of the higher reality and the lower reality expounded in the first two chapters and the 'phala-svarupa' that is described in the fourth chapter, are equally applicable to a prapanna. The truths that are taught in the 'Vairagya-pada' and 'ubhayalinga-pada' of the third chapter, are necessarily to be known by a prapanna also. The description of the different types of 'upasana', exclusively relates to the relevant upasaka.

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For a Prapanna, the Prapatti that is performed by him awards the same result through the grace of the Lord.

The performance of the ordained duties of one's station in life (Varnashrama Dharmas) described in the fourth chapter of the Vedanta Sutras, happens to be an accessory to upasana; but, a Prapanna is obliged to observe all those duties, as carrying out the commands of the Lord, though not as an accessory to Prapatti. Thus, the truths expounded in the Vedanta Sutras are implicit in the Mula Mantra. On account of a clear comprehension of the truths taught by the Mula Mantra, one becomes unassailable by any other school of thought. He will not be disturbed by any kind of provocation or acclamation:–

न प्रहृष्यति सम्माने नावमानेऽनुतप्यते ।
गंगा ह्रद इवाक्षोभ्यः यस्स पण्डित उच्यते ॥

"He does not delight when honoured nor does he feel sad when dishonoured, like the deep waters of the Ganga, he will never be disturbed. Only such a person is a 'pandit'."

In concluding this exposition of the great Mantra, Desika glorifies the greatness of this Mantra in the following verses:–

ऋचो यजूंषि सामानि तथैवाथर्वणानि च ।
सर्वमष्टाक्षरान्तःस्थं यच्चान्यदपि वाङ्मयम् ॥

"What is taught by the Rik, the Yajus, the Samans and the Atharva – all that, is contained in this Great Mantra – Ashtakshara. Not only this much, what all else is found in speech, does exist in this."

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By once reciting this Mantra with full faith, one gains at once what is gained by the study of all Vedas.

यस्य यावांश्च विश्वासः तस्य सिद्धिश्च तादृशी ।

एतावानिति नैतस्य प्रभावः परिमीयते ॥

"The greatness of this Mantra cannot be exactly measured as this much. The realisation will be that much, to one whose faith is that much."

A person who has supreme faith in this Mantra, will realise the infinite greatness of this Mantra. Desika says in conclusion, even the promulgator of this Mantra and the deity of this Mantra, who is by nature omniscient and seer of this Mantra, cannot know fully the greatness of this Mantra, as it is not specified that it is fully knowable by such and such.

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CHAPTER – XXVIII

Dvayadhikara

The Dvaya Mantra illumines clearly the particular means of spiritual perfection that is prescribed in the middle term of the Mula Mantra, and also the particular object of attainment that is laid out in the third term of the Mula Mantra. This Holy Mantra is described by Desika as a 'Tantrika Mantra' which is expounded in the shruti. 'सकृदुच्चारः संसारतारणं भवति' – This signifies the greatness of this Mantra. The two sentences have been mentioned separately and it is ordained that it should be meditated upon with the Mantra – 'इदंपूर्णं अदं पूर्णम्' – in the middle. In Sri Pancharathra Mahopanishat – in Tantra-Jnana-Pada – in the First Chapter, the meaning of 'Dvaya Mantra' is described as follows:–

'लक्ष्मीनारायणमयं प्रणवार्थप्रकाशकम् ।
सत्यज्ञानानन्दरूपं श्रीकरं तं नमाम्यहम् ॥
जीवान्तर्यामिणं देवं सर्वान्तार्यामिणं प्रभुम् ।
अर्चावतारं सद्विष्णुं मकारं तं नमाम्यहम्' ॥

Here, the order of 'varnas' or letters is pointed out. After this, the glory of the 'Dvaya Mantra' is expounded there as follows:–

श्रीमन्नारायणस्यैव परस्य परमात्मनः ।
द्विजानां मुक्तिदं मन्त्रं द्वयम् तत् शुद्धसात्विकम् ॥
मन्त्ररत्नाख्यसंदर्भं पंचविंशति वर्णकम् ॥

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पंचविंशति तत्त्वाढ्यं पंचोपनिषदात्मकम् ॥

गायत्र्या वेदविद्यादि अष्टाक्षरमयं तथा ।

The glory of the Dvaya Mantra, as a supreme mantra, is expounded here, thus very clearly.

In the introductory verse to this chapter, the unique significance of Dvaya Mantra, is expounded by Desika –

'आकर्णितो वितनुते कृतकृत्यकक्ष्याम्

आम्रेडितो दिशति यश्च कृतार्थभावम् ।

प्रत्यूषतां भजति संसृतिकालरात्रेः ।

पद्मासहाय - शरणागतिमन्त्र एषः' ॥

When this celebrated mantra, that is taught by the preceptor, is uttered as addressed to the Paramatman once, it will take him to a state of having done what ought to be done. By the nature of this mantra, this mantra itself causes that satisfaction of having done one's duty, even when the significant meanings of the mantra are not understood; but, this should be uttered once clearly, so that, the Lord becomes aware of it.

When it is repeated after the initial recitation addressed to the Lord, it gives one a feeling of 'kritartata' कृतार्थता that is the state of having attained the 'prayojana' of that act. In the first utterance, the means of spiritual perfection is fulfilled, and in the later recitals – as it is 'स्वतः पुरुषार्थता' – it will endow one with the feeling of having attained the supreme benefit. This Dvaya Mantra, which is the mantra used for surrender of the self to the Lord, is verily the early dawn, or the 'Arunodaya' which dispels the dense darkness

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of the long night of 'samsara' or migration from birth to birth. Unlike any other mantra, there is no need for reciting it again and again; but, it will be fruitful by actualizing complete 'Prapatti' in course of time, even in that life time itself, by the utterance of this once.

Desika points out that this mantra is prescribed in the 'Kata-Valli' and the 'Agamas' particularly in Prasna Samhita and others. This mantra is called by the name 'Dvaya', because it expounds the two celebrated truths viz., the means (upaya) and the end (upeya). A person, who has distanced himself from other 'upayas' than Paramatman, and who has distanced himself likewise from other 'upeyas' or objects of attainment, is fully qualified for this mantra. Some masters describe that this mantra is called 'dvaya', as it is signifying 'varana' or praying to the Lord for protection, and also 'samarpana' or offering oneself solely to the service of the Lord. The rules that are ordained in respect of other mantras of 'Prapatti' are equally applicable to this mantra also. So, one has to approach a preceptor, and propitiating the preceptor, should get this mantra taught by him.

Eminence of this mantra

This 'Mantra-Raja' or sovereign of mantras, should be obtained through initiation from an 'Acharya', who is the most celebrated and respected. Approaching such a preceptor with all humility and devotion and prostrating at his feet, this 'Mantra-Raja' should be obtained from him, just as an indigent person aspiring wealth gains a great treasure. "Having gained this mantra, he should surrender unto Me, with this mantra alone. He becomes a 'kritakritya' or one who has done his duty, the moment he surrenders unto Me" – says the Lord.

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'अनेनैव तु मन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत् ।
मयि निक्षिप्तकर्तव्यो कृतकृत्यो भविष्यति' ॥

Seeking the grace of the preceptor and worshipping him with devotion, is common to all 'Prapatti' mantras, but the unique feature of this mantra is that the mere utterance of this mantra once (सकृदुच्चारणमात्रं) results in salvation.

The statement 'येन केनापि प्रकारेण द्वयवक्ता त्वम्' – by whatsoever manner one recites this dvaya mantra – points out, how this mantra is distinct from other mantras. It is declared that the recital of the Holy Names of the Lord, knowingly or unknowingly, is going to dispel all sins, in the following verses –

अवशेनापि यन्नाम्नि कीर्तिते सर्वपातकैः ।
पुमान् विमुच्यते सद्यः सिंहत्रस्तैः मृगैरिव ॥
नाम्नस्ते यावती शक्तिः पापनिर्हरणे हरे ।
श्वपचोऽपि नरः कर्तुं क्षमस्तावन्न किलिबम् ॥

"When the Holy Names of the Lord are uttered even unintentionally, a person will be divested of all sins, even as deer are scared of a lion".

"Even an out-caste, is not capable of committing sins to such extent, as the Holy Names of Yours are capable of annihilating sins".

While the mere recital of the Holy Names of the Lord is having such eminence, what to say about the eminence of this dvaya-mantra, which fully illumines the redeemer (Sharanya), the surrender unto Him (Sharanagati) and the specific fruits of such a surrender (tatphala-vishesha).

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The eminence of the recital of this mantra even once, can be known from the sruties. One should have implicit faith in the shastra, and one should not resort to reasoning in respect of truths that are to be guarded (Rahasyatamartha). It is pointed out in Mahabharata–

'देवगुह्येषु चान्येषु हेतुर्देवि निरर्थकः ।
बधिरान्धवदेवात्र वर्तितव्यं हितैषिणा' ॥

"It is futile to reason out in secret truths and others that are not known to gods also. A person who is interested in his good as well as others should behave like a deaf and blind person in this behalf".

Atma Samarpanam is inclusive of Bhara Samarpanam

The offering of the Atman – that is pure – is what is intended in this mantra, as pointed out in the verse:–

'सर्वोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं क्षेत्रज्ञं ब्रह्मणि न्यसेत्' ।

"The Atman who is freed from all limiting adjuncts such as 'avidya' or 'karma' and others, should be placed in 'Brahman'. This is 'knowledge' and the object of knowledge. Though it is expressive of 'svarupa-samarpanam', the offering of the burden of protection 'bhara-samarpana', is included in it because, without 'svarupa-samarpanam', there cannot be 'bhara-samarpanam'. It is declared in Vyasa Smriti and others as follows:–

'निवेदयत स्वात्मानं विष्णावमलतेजसि ।
तदात्मा तन्मनाश्शान्तः तद्विष्णोरिति मन्त्रतः' ॥

"Offer yourself unto the Lord Vishnu of pure effulgence with the mantra तद्विष्णोः etc". 'Thadatma' means being His

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body i.e., being 'sheshabhuta'. 'Tanmanāh' signifies that he should be attached to Him, who is the sole object of attainment. 'Shāntah' means having no other benefit or 'prayojana'. Thus, this mantra illumines vividly all the three viz., the 'sharanya' or the refuge, the 'sharanagati' or surrender unto Him and the 'prayojana' or object of attainment.

The profound meanings of this mantra are explained in Sharanagati-Gadya by Ramanuja, according to the tradition handed over by the eminent Acharyas. The meaning of 'Shrimat' is taught in the opening passage of the 'Gadya' beginning with 'भगवन्नारायणाभिमतानुरूप' etc. The portion in the 'Gadya' describing the svarupa, rupa and guna of the Lord as 'अखिलहेयप्रत्यनीक' etc., explains the meaning of the term 'Narayana'. There is a reference to 'Sri' again, while explaining the term 'Narayana' for signifying Her role as a 'purushakara' or a mediatrix. 'अनन्यशरणोऽहं' in the 'Gadya', signifies the particular aspirant pointed out in 'prapadye' of this mantra. The terms 'चरणौ' and 'शरणं' as well as the verb of this mantra, are explained in the Gadyam by the term 'त्वत्पादारविन्दसुभलं शरणं प्रपद्ये'। After all this, there is a statement in the Gadya as 'Atra Dvayam' which means that the dvaya-mantra is thus explained.

Further, the meaning of 'Namas' signifying the termination of undesirables (anishta-nivritti) – is explained in detail. The prayer for 'Para-Bhakti' and others, signifies the 'purushartha' pointed out by the dative-case. So, it can be understood that all the truths expounded in the 'Sharanagati Gadya' are the profound meanings of this great

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mantra. The meanings of this mantra are expounded by the Alwars such as Nammalwar and others also in their hymns.

The meaning of 'श्रीमन्नारायण'

The Supreme Reality (Paratattva) that is the one Refuge of all (sarva-sharanya) is signified by this term. The unique characteristic of 'श्रियःपतित्व' and the celebrated name 'Narayana', which is praised gloriously in the Narayana-Anuvaka determine the Paradevata-svarupa. Narayana characterised by Sri, is the protector. As the goddess 'Sri' is inseparable from Narayana, we have to know Him only along with 'Sri' –

'आकारिणस्तु विज्ञानं आकारज्ञानपूर्वकम् ।
तेनाकारं श्रियं ज्ञात्वा ज्ञातव्यो भगवान् हरिः' ॥

"The knowledge of a qualified object is possible only through the attribute. So, knowing first the 'Sri' who is an 'Ākāra' or a 'visheshana', the 'Ākāri' or 'visheshya' – the Lord is to be known".

As 'Sri' is the visheshana' in the latter part (uttara-khanda), She is to be known as a 'visheshana' even in the former part of this manthra (purva-khanda). This has been discussed and decided in the section on the examination of the 'Siddhopaya' already. There will not be the eventuality of two 'upayas', as the only one 'upaya' is qualified by the 'upaya-visheshanas'. The term 'Sri' is explained as having six derivations such as – श्रीयते (she is sought); श्रयते (she seeks the Lord for the protection of the souls); शृणोति (she listens); श्रावयति (she makes the Lord hear); शृणाति (she destroys the faults of the आश्रितःs) and श्रीणाति (she fills the world with her virtues).

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Purushakaratva of Goddess Sri

She is sought by those who desire to gain spiritual perfection and she is resorting the Lord for saving those who have taken refuge with her. She pleads with the Lord for the protection of the sinners, as the mother arguing on behalf of the erring children. She is by nature the well-wisher of all, and softens the wrath of the Lord, who is by nature a just punisher, and cause His natural compassion to flow towards them to redeem them from 'samsara'. So, here 'Sri' plays the role of a 'purushakara' on account of her 'vatsalya' natural to a mother.

A meditator or a purushakara is one whom we seek to help us to approach a person from whom we desire to gain some object, by influencing that person by virtue of his influence. In 'Nikshepa Raksha', Desika expounds the 'pramanas' for the need of a purushakara, as follows:–

अर्थस्वभावानुष्ठानलोकदृष्टिगरूक्तिभिः ।

श्रुत्या स्मृत्या च संसिद्धं घटकार्थावलम्बनम् ॥

'Artha-svabhava' is as follows:–

The Lord, like a father is not easily approachable. He becomes approachable if we approach him through the mother, who is full of affection towards us and who never gets angry on account of her overflowing compassion. As she is very 'dear' to the Lord, He will never turn down her intervention.

'Anushtana' can be known, from the fact that the Lord in His incarnation as Sri Nrisimha, became approachable to the gods like Brahma and others, when they went near Him having Goddess Mahalakshmi before them.

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'Lokadristi' can be seen in the instance of the king's pardoning (for the sake of the queen) the attendants in the royal harem, even though they have committed grave offences.

'गुरूक्ति' is the noble expressions of Alwars like Nammalwar and others, as well as Acharyas, who have surrendered to the Lord having the mother Mahalakshmi supporting them. The shrutis such as विश्वप्रिये विष्णुमनोनुकूले and others are well known.

Smritis are the utterings of sages like Shounaka and others, that ordain that one should surrender first to the Goddess Sri, for being one's purushakara, when one prays the Lord for the good that cannot be described in words –

वाचः परं प्रार्थयता प्रपद्येन्नियतः श्रियम् ।

The role of a mediatrix or 'ghatakatva' of 'Sri' is thus established according to a number of pramanas, and so, it is appropriate to have 'Her' as our purushakara. She is not only a purushakara but also a 'siddhopaya-visheshana'. This is clearly expounded in the verse –

'लक्ष्म्या सह हृषीकेशः देव्या कारुण्यरूपया ।
रक्षकः सर्वसिद्धान्ते वेदान्तेषु च गीयते' ॥

"In all siddhantas like mantra, siddhanta and others, and in vedanta, the Lord with Goddess Mahalakshmi, is declared as the protector. For aspirants of spiritual perfection, Goddess 'Sri' annihilates the sins, that are obstacles for the adoption of the means of those that seek refuge with Her, and She will bless them in such a way, that those people will attain all good culminating in the 'kainkarya' to the Lord.

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The meaning of मतुप् in श्रीमत्

The suffix 'मतुप्' has many meanings, but in this context, has the meaning of 'Nitya-Yoga' or eternal association. It cannot be said that 'Sri' exists independently, separated from the Lord at any time and that the Lord exists any time without 'Sri'. They are ever united together. In the state of 'upaya' as well as in the state of attainment, there is eternal association with 'Sri' to the Lord. This fact of Sri being together with the Lord, enables the offenders to approach boldly the Lord, for protection, as they will be blessed with the purushakara always.

In the state of 'upaya' in the purva-khanda, the particular auspicious qualities that are helpful for seeking protection are to be reflected. So, it must be taken that 'श्रीमत्' is a necessary attribute. In the uttara-khanda, Narayana characterised by every other object (sarva-visishta), is the object of attainment (prapya). The term 'श्रीमत्' is a necessary attribute there also.

Meaning of the term Narayana

Though all the meanings that were expounded for this Holy Name in the Mula Mantra are equally applicable here also, it is appropriate to meditate upon such qualities that signify the protectorship of Narayana in the purva-khanda or former part. The qualities of vatsalya, swamitva, sousheelya, soulabhya, sarvajnatva, sarva-shaktitva, sathya-sankalpatva, parama-karunikatva, krtajnatva, sthiratva, paripurnatva, paramodaratva and others, are the most prominent qualities that are to be meditated upon the term 'Narayana' in the former part of this mantra. Vatsalya is a quality that emboldens one to approach the Lord for

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redemption. This quality of not seeing the faults of an aspirant is most helpful to accept Him for protection. Swamitva or mastery over every other entity, is the particular relationship of 'Shesha-Sheshi-Bhava', that is taught in the pranava. This will be helpful to an aspirant for gaining confidence when he reflects that the Lord would save him for his own benefit. Sousheelya or the quality of a supreme person mixing with the low freely, will help the aspirant not to go away from the Supreme Lord, thinking of his own inferiority. Soulabhya is the quality that makes the Lord accessible to one and all, inspite of His supreme nature. Sarvajnatva or omniscience, is the quality by which Lord knows everything everywhere, always directly. So, it fills the aspirant with confidence that there is nothing which He does not know, about the good He has to give and the impediments He has to clear in respect of those who take refuge in Him. Sarva-shaktitva or ability to work out even the impossible, is helpful for deciding that the Lord can take even migrating souls like us to His Eternal Abode according to His will. Satya-sankalpatva is having no opposition or obstruction to His will either by Himself or from others. This makes us strongly believe His declaration that He would release one from all sins, when he surrenders unto Him.

Parama-karunikatva or supreme compassion is a desire to dispel the sorrows of others without expecting any benefit for Himself. This makes us know that the Lord would redeem one on account of a mere pretext even when one has committed infinite sins.

Krutajnatva is the quality of not forgetting even a slight favourable action done to Him, but remembering it as a

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great benefaction done to Him. This will be filling us with supreme faith that He would not forsake us while He sees even a trivial pretext in favour of Him.

Sthiratvam is to be steadfast in protecting those who have sought protection from Him.

Paripoornatva is the quality of having attained all objects of desire. This is indicative of the Lord, who does not expect anything other than supreme love towards Him.

Paramodaratva is a supreme quality of feeling that what He has granted is not enough for the devotion of the aspirant, even after granting the devotee everything at His disposal, not taking into account the 'upaya-laghava' or smallness of the aspirant.

Like this, all qualities that are helpful for seeking refuge with the Lord, are to be reflected in this Holy Name.

In the state of realisation, that is pointed out in the latter part of the uttara-khanda, though the Lord is being experienced, being characterised by all auspicious qualities and vibhuthies 'समस्तगुणविभूतिविशिष्टः' it is to be noted that the prime qualities of 'sheshitva' and 'nirathishaya-bhogyatva' are prominent. So, in the term 'Narayana' in the uttara-khanda, the qualities that are ensuing on account of the essential nature of the Lord and also the auspicious qualities that are related to 'kainkarya' are to be mainly meditated upon.

The meaning of Sriman Narayana Charanau

These terms are taken as a single compound word by some masters. They can be taken as three terms separated also. There are usages like 'Kamala-Nayana Vasudeva Bhava

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Sharanam', Sriman, Narayana, Swamin', etc. It may be taken as two nominatives of address as 'Sriman' and 'Narayana', and taking the word 'tava' as understood, 'charanau' is used along with that. It may be noted that the meanings do not change in either way. This kind of usage is the same in the former part and the latter part of this mantra.

The term 'charanau' indicates the eternal, auspicious, non-material form of the Lord. The two factors viz., the most supreme nature of the Lord of Sri and the non-material eternal form of the Lord, are the foremost of the objects to be known in the Dvaya Mantra. This is pointed out in the statement –

'नित्यसिद्धे तदाकारे तत्परत्वेन पौष्कर ।
यस्यास्ति सत्ता हृदये तस्यासौ सन्निधिं व्रजेत् '।

"The Lord shows Himself to a person whose mind is devoted to these two natures of the Lord; in whose heart the eternally realised auspicious form of the Lord and the knowledge of His utmost supremacy, are present". In the term 'Sriman Narayan', one should reflect upon the supremacy combined with accessibility of the Lord, and in the term 'charanau' the fact of His possessing an eternal auspicious non-material body (Nitya Vigraha Yoga) is to be reflected.

Even for those people, who have not the knowledge of the auspicious qualities of the Lord, the auspicious divine form may be the object of meditation. As the form itself is more prominent than the auspicious qualities, Bhagavan Ramanuja describes the divine form the Lord, prior to the exposition of His auspicious qualities in his Gadyam. The Divine Form of the Lord is called 'Shubhashraya'.

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'परावरसुखग्राह्यं प्रेमबोधप्रसावकम् ।
स्वरूपात् स्वामिनो रूपं उपादेयतमं विदुः' ॥
'चित्तालम्बन सौकर्यकृपोत्तम्भकतदिभिः ।
उपायत्वमिह स्वामिपादयोरनुसंहितम् ' ॥

The sacred feet of the Lord have the facility of being thought of by the mind and the compassion of the Lord will be aroused by one's devotion to His feet. So here, the fact of being our means of realisation is thought of, in the two feet of the Lord. The Alwars also have concentrated upon the Holy Feet of the Lord, as their means of salvation.

It is said by some that the mention of the term 'charanau' in this Holy Mantra, is unfavourable to the view of the Lord, being characterised by 'Sri'. This is not proper. The term in the dual number, excludes 'Sri' as an 'upaya', it is argued. But, Desika says that it is not so. The Lord is the one and non-second who is characterised by 'Sri' and other auspicious qualities. The 'visheshya' happens to be the Lord only and the mention of the two feet of the Lord, cannot exclude 'Sri' who is only a 'visheshana' eternally united with Him.

'शब्दस्वरसतः प्राप्तम् वैशिष्ट्यं प्रथमं श्रुतम् ।
विशेष्यचरणद्वित्वं न हि बाधितुमर्हति ' ॥

It may be asked in this context, that there is no need for a 'visheshana' for that Almighty to become a means. If He also depends on something, He cannot be called a 'sarvashakta' or omnipotent.

This question may be raised even in respect of Guna-Vigraha-Yoga that is ordained by the term 'Narayana' and

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the term charanau'. If it is further said that they are 'visheshanas' and that they serve particular purposes, and so, they are not opposed to his 'sarva-shaktitva, the same may be said in respect of 'Sri' also, who is related to Him as His consort. If relying upon the mere term 'charanau', the association with 'Sri' is taken as indicative (upa-lakshana), then the same has to be said in respect of the association of the auspicious qualities also. In this way, one need not take 'Sri' even as purushakara, as it will be contrary to His sarva-shaktitva. If it is pointed out that the Lord, who is an ordainer, and strict dispenser of results according to one's deeds, and so it would not be possible for a transgresser to approach Him straightway, and so the mediation of Goddess Lakshmi is necessary, and that She is permitted by the All-Independent Lord to officiate as a mediatrix, then it may be taken in the same way that the Lord becomes a protector being united with His consort Sri Lakshmi by His own independent will. To accept so, will not be contrary to any pramana.

The term 'Sharanam' in this Holy Mantra, signifies the means –

भरन्यासबलादेव स्वयत्नविनिवृत्तये ।
अत्रोपायान्तरस्थाने रक्षको विनिवेशितः ॥

"By virtue of the surrender of the burden of one's protection and on account of the giving up of one's own effort further, the protector Himself is placed in the place of the other means". Is not the Lord, the means for all who worship Him through various modes of meditation? What is the speciality here? The answer to this question is as follows:–

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A Bhakti-Yogi performs 'Prapatti' as an accessory to his Bhakti-Yoga and then continues his Bhakti Yoga as 'mokshopaya', and obtains the fruit from the Lord. Here, a prapanna obtains the same fruit by his mere 'Prapatti' without undertaking any further upaya, on account of the natural compassion and other noble qualities of the Lord. So, it amounts to say that the Lord stands in the place of another upaya.

An 'akinchana' or a person – who is utterly helpless – prays to the Lord – "without burdening me with the performance of any other means, and bearing all that burden on your own shoulders, you may – out of your compassion – gain me all the benefits that would have been obtained by following that means". This is determined as 'Atma-Nikshepa'. This culminates in the realisation of 'swa-nirbharatva' or being freed from one's own burden.

The meaning of prapadye

The term 'prapadye' signifies the particular kind of knowledge that is required in this context, as the root of this verb signifies knowledge also, though it is meaning action. The firm understanding of the form of "The Lord certainly protects us" is what is indicated in this verb. The preposition 'Pra' points out the intensity of faith, which is known as 'maha-vishvasa'. This faith originates when one reflects upon the inseparable association of purushakara relationship and the auspicious qualities that are indicated by the term 'श्रीमत्' and the term 'Narayana'. By this faith, all kinds of doubts that would arise on account of one's profuse sinning and others will become divested. What is required is this kind of firm and unshakable faith alone. This is well known as pointed out in the following verses:–

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'व्यवसायाहृते ब्रह्म नासादयति तत्परम् ।

निस्संशयेषु सर्वेषु नित्यं वसति वै हरिः ।

ससंशयान् हेतुबलान् नाध्यावसति माधवः' ॥

"Without 'maha-vishvasa', one does not attain that Supreme Brahman'. 'That Supreme Hari becomes easily accessible to those who have no doubts. He does not show Himself to those who are full of doubts and who resort to mere logic." If this supreme faith happens to one, at no time will any doubt arise. Though this kind of faith is mild in the beginning, the Lord will make it completed by his compassion. Even 'manda-vishvasa' or mild faith will become 'maha-vishvasa'. When one recounts his supreme faith as 'I decide this as my spiritual means', the prayer to the Lord for becoming his upaya also, will be fulfilled. Seeking protection also, is included in this prayer for being his means. As a Prapanna is not praying for the means of the form of Bhakti Yoga, as the fruit of his 'prapatti', what is it that he prays here? Here, what is prayed is – that he should accept the burden of one's protection, as the Lord himself grants the desired fruit by substituting himself in the place of any other upaya. The significance of the purva-khanda may be summed up like this:–

"You may stand in the place of any other means for me, the utterly helpless, for granting me the particular desired object, I am surrendering the burden of the protection of mine unto you". So, it will be entrusting the burden of one's protection associated with a particular prayer like this. The 'atma-samarpanam' or entrusting the burden of the self also, is the meaning of the term 'adhyavasaya' or supreme faith. The significance of prapatti is thus, surrendering the burden

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of protection along with the accessories to Him. This kind of surrendering of the self is the prime part of prapatti. It is pointed out in the verse below:-

'अनेनैव तु मन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत् ।

मयि निक्षिप्तकर्तव्यः कृतकृत्यो भविष्यति' ॥

"By this mantra alone, one should entrust oneself unto me; having fulfilled the duty of surrendering unto me, he will become one who has done what ought to be done". The usage of this verb 'prapadye' in present tense, relates to the time of actual performance of prapatti. What is uttered at the time of actual surrender, happens to be the upaya or means and what all is reflected later on as 'सदा एवं वक्ता' etc., is not included in the upaya. Like this, in the purva-khanda (former part of this supreme mantra) the fact of Paramatman being the protector of all, (sarva-sharanyatva), the essential nature of prapatti (sharanagati svarupa), the accessories of prapatti (parikara) and the particularity of the aspirant qualified for prapatti 'अधिकारि विशेष' – all these are illumined. By this, the fact of having no other means (ananyopayatva) is realised.

The meanings of the uttara-khanda

The term 'Narayana' characterised by Goddess 'Sri' shows the characteristics of the Paramatman, that are in accordance with the supreme object of attainment. 'Swamitva' or overlordship, 'Ananta-Guna-Vibhuti-visishtatva or the fact of being characterised by infinite auspicious qualities and glories, and 'niratishaya-bhogyatva' or infinitely pleasing nature of the Lord, are prominently to be known in this term. Here, though the object of attainment (prapyam)

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characterised by the two vibhuties (viz., Leela Vibhuti and Nitya Vibhuti) is signified, the prime object of attainment is the divine couple, who are the 'sheshins' of all, and who are to be served with 'kainkarya' or divine service, and who are the persons to whom the oblation of the form of the atman is offered. This is signified by the term 'श्रीमत्' All the great masters and the Alwars have experienced the Paramatman along with 'Sri' in the state of attainment as found in –

'वैकुण्ठेतु परे लोके श्रिया सार्धं जगत्पतिः' ।

'तया सहासीनमनन्तभोगिनि आत्मानुरूपया श्रिया सहासीनम्' ॥

and others

Though the term 'Sri' has many significant meanings, here the meaning of 'service unto the mother' (sevyatva) is prominently to be reflected upon. Being associated with such Goddess, who would generate particular kinds of affections for undertaking all kinds of divine services, the Supreme Paramatman is signified by the term 'Narayana' for attainment of perfect experience of the Lord, along with all auspicious qualities and vibhuties.

The dative case in the term 'Narayana', signifies 'kainkarya' or divine service with the realisation of eternal subservience to the Lord. It does not signify only 'तादर्थ्य' or existence for His sake only. Through this realisation, all the services that are done to Him are signified by the dative case here. This is described as – 'तच्छेषत्वानुसन्धानपूर्वतच्छेषवृत्तिः' i.e. devoting wholly to the subservience of the Lord with full realisation of one's eternal nature of 'seshatva'. Here, as a prayer is offered to the Lord for attainment of this desire, a verb 'bhaveyam' is to be understood. The desired object

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(ishta-prapti) is first prayed and for the fulfilment of that, by the term 'namas' the destruction of all undesirables (sarva-anishta-nivritti) is prayed.

Even for this term 'Namah', a verb 'syam' should be taken as understood. It will yield the meaning 'न मम स्याम्' । 'न मम किञ्चित् स्यात्' i.e., may not anything be attained by me. By this term 'Namah' not only all obstructions to the realisation of Paramatman – such as ignorance, karma, karmavasana, ruchi and prakriti-sambandha (association with matter) – are desired to be terminated, but in addition to it, independent doership and independent enjoyership – 'स्वाधीन कर्तृत्वं, स्वाधीन भोक्तृत्वं' doership for one's own benefit and enjoyership for one's own benefit – स्वार्थकर्तृत्वं स्वार्थभोक्तृत्वं - are also desired to be totally annihilated. As the aspirant realises that these are not traced in the service to the Lord, in the state of liberation, here a prayer is made for attainment of such service.

The fact of entrusting fully the burden of protection to the Lord and the state of being care free and free from the burden, is signified by the term 'नमः'. This is mentioned as 'Nyrapekshya'. (नैरपेक्ष्य) As all burdens of the sentient principles are entrusted to the care of Paramatman, the state of 'Nyrapekshya' i.e., wanting of nothingness is signified by 'Namas' –

'परमात्मनि नाराणां सर्वभारसमर्पणात् ।
संजातं नैरपेक्ष्यं तु नम इत्युच्चते बुधैः' ॥

This 'Nyrapekshya', or absence of wanting something, is going to ensure the 'Nirbharatva' or having no

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responsibility in one's own protection. In offering the oblation to the gods, it is offered with the statement 'इदं इन्द्राय न मम' । "This oblation is for God Indra; it is never more related to me". Likewise, when the burden of protection is offered to the Lord, it is offered with the statement 'अहं श्रीमते नारायणाय' "I am offered unto Narayana for his own purpose', and afterwards, it is appropriate to say 'न मम'.

According to this interpretation, the purva-khanda signifies the five accessories of Prapatti, and the uttara-khanda or the later part, signifies the main act of offering i.e., अङ्गि प्रतिपादकम्' . Here, this signifies as mentioned in the statements, यत् संरक्ष्यतया अर्प्यते 'that which is offered to be protected by you", 'तवैवास्मि हि भरः' "I belong to thee alone to be protected by you'. These statements signify that the burden of his protection as well as the fruit of protection belong to Him alone.

The terms of the Dvayamantra, illumine the following truths by virtue of the meanings of those terms. They are as follows:–

The fact of having 'Purushakara' (by the term 'Sri'), the nityatva of Purushakara (by the suffix मत्), the fact of 'upaya' being characterised by 'Sri' (उपाय वैशिष्ट्यम्), the fact of the protector being characterised by all auspicious qualities (the meaning of the term 'Narayana'), the particular inseparable relationship between the protector and the souls (the meaning of अयन), the fact of having an auspicious divine form and the particular aspect where a devotee should take

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refuge (चरण शब्दार्थ), the fact of the feet of the Lord being the 'upaya' (the meaning of शरणम्), the particular way of choosing Him as the 'upaya' (the meaning of प्रपद्ये), the accessories for that such as 'Maha Vishvasa' and others, the utter helplessness of the aspirant (suggested by the usage of the term in First Person viz., प्रपद्ये), the fact of the object of attainment being characterised by Goddess Sri (the meaning of श्रीमते in the uttara-khanda), the fact of attaining Paramatman characterised by all auspicious gunas and vibhuties (the meaning of the term 'Narayana') the fact of signifying the supreme, to whom the divine service is to be offered (the meaning of the dative case आय), and praying for such divine service and attaining the same.

The termination of all undesirables obstructing such eternal service (the meaning of 'Namas') and likewise, the fact of this attainment being eternal and the fact of attaining doership and enjoyership dependent upon the Lord and for the sake of the Lord alone – thus, all these truths are illumined by the two parts of the Dvayamantra.

According to our ancient masters, this Dvayamantra is prominently signifying the performance of surrender, the means for attainment of the 'phala' of eternal divine service unto the Lord. Though, according to पाठक्रम or the order of the terms, the 'upaya' is first mentioned in the purva-khanda and the 'फलप्रतिपादकवाक्य' or the sentence describing the fruit is found later, it is pointed out by the ancient masters that, according to 'अर्थक्रम' or the sequence of meanings, the meanings of the uttara-khanda are to be reflected earlier. A person undertakes some means only after deciding the

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purusharta or the object of attainment first. This performance of Prapatti becomes possible only when he cherishes the supreme phala or fruit that is mentioned there. This Dvayamantra expounds prominently the उपायानुष्ठान ।

The purva-khanda and the terms in the dative case and the term 'namah', signify three separate sentences; but yet, it is being expounded as a single sentence, giving prominence to the performance of the 'upaya' – Prapatti.

Desika gives the essence of this mantra in one maha-vakya as follows:–

For attaining 'Paripurna Kainkarya' or total loving service, overcoming all kinds of obstructions for the attainment of all kinds of service appropriate to all states, all times and all places, which are according to one's essential nature, at the feet of Sriman Narayana, the overlord of all entities, who is infinitely enjoyable on account of His most auspicious qualities, who is inseparably associated with Goddess Sri, I am offering the burden of the protection of myself, along with the five accessories of surrender, being utterly helpless, so that there should be no responsibility in the burden of the protection of myself.

Desika declares in the conclusion of this section that these unique truths were gained from the instruction of great masters of yore –

'वैराग्यविजितस्वान्तैः प्रपत्तिविजितेश्वरैः ।
अनुक्रोशैकविजितैः इत्युपादेशि देशिकैः' ।

"On account of their unique dispassion, they conquered the Lord by virtue of their surrender unto His feet; but, they were conquered by their compassion, and on account

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of this, our masters taught these truths to the worthy disciples".

Desika points out in this verse that these truths were all obtained on account of 'सत्संप्रदायसिद्ध सदाचार्योपदेश' or the instructions obtained from noble masters who were established according to the continuous tradition. He analyses the Dvayamantra in different ways as follows:–

When the words are separated from one another, it constitutes eight words as –

श्रीमन्, नारायण, चरणौ, शरणं, प्रपद्ये

श्रीमते, नारायणाय, नमः ।

When words are compounded, it will be a mantra of six words –

श्रीमन्नारायणचरणौ, शरणं, प्रपद्ये

श्रीमते, नारायणाय, नमः

and there are five terms in different cases and one verb. 'Prapadye' is the verb and other words are in different cases.

The glory of Dvayamantra is expounded in the following verse:–

'एकं द्वयं त्र्यवयवम् सुखलभ्यतुर्थं

व्यक्तार्थपञ्चकं उपात्तषडङ्ग योगम् ।

सप्तार्णवीमहिमवद्विवृताष्टवर्णं ।

रङ्गे सतामिह रसं नवमं प्रसूते ' ।

The Dvayamantra is of one sentence, and it is called by the name 'Dvaya'. It has got three subsidiary sentences. By

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uttering once, the fourth 'purusharta' viz. Moksha is easily obtained. It is generating the knowledge of the five truths and so, greatly celebrated, and through the fulfillment of 'Shadanga Yoga', it is a means of 'Moksha' and its greatness is infinite, just like the vastness of seven great oceans taken together, and it is the explanation of the 'Ashtakshara Mantra'. It is causing 'शान्तिरस' for those who are dwelling in Sri Ranga or who have surrendered unto Sri Ranganatha.

'न वेदान्तात् शास्त्रं न मधुमथनाद्दैवमधिकं
न तद्भक्तातीर्थं न तदभिमतात्सत्विकपदम् ।
न सत्वादारोग्यं न बुधभजनात् बोधजनकं
न मुक्तेः सौरव्यं न द्वयवचनतः क्षेमकरणम् ' ॥

There is no shastra more celebrated than Vedanta; there is no deity, greater than Sriman Narayana, the destroyer of the demon Madhu. There is no one more purifying than the devotee of that Narayana; there is no dwelling place greater than the one that is desired by the devotee of the Lord; there is nothing greater than 'satvic food' that generates health; there is nothing greater than taking refuge in an Acharya (सदाचार्य) who causes tattva - jnanam; there is no happiness greater than 'moksha' or liberation; there is nothing more celebrated than the Dvayamantra that causes 'moksha'.

Thus, Desika has expounded the glorious meanings of this Great Mantra.

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CHAPTER - XXIX

Charamasloka Adhikara

The eminent Charama-Sloka is taught directly to Arjuna by Lord Sri Krishna himself. This verse ordains the performance of self-surrender, the glory of which is expounded by the Mulamantra and the Dvayamantra. Desika traces the circumstances that led to the instruction of this great mantra.

On the eve of the Mahabharata War, Arjuna developed dejection, despondency and was overcome with feelings of compassion towards those, who were not worthy of it. He feared that he would commit grave sin by killing those who stood in battle array against him. He mistook 'dharma' for 'adharma'. Not knowing the right path of action, he surrendered unto the Supreme Paramatman, his charioteer, Sri Krishna, and begged of him to show him the right path by following which he could attain ultimate good.

Then, the most compassionate Lord taught him first of all the nature of the jivatman, which is different and distinct from the body and others, and which is solely subservient to Paramatman. He enlightened him upon the nature of the ultimate object of life and the paths of Karamayoga and Jnanayoga that are accessories to the main path of liberation viz. Bhaktiyoga. Listening to all these, Arjuna was overcome with grief on account of his utter inability to practise Bhaktiyoga and the Lord taught him this eminent path of liberation viz. surrender at the feet of the Lord, which did not require any other accessory than Anukulya Sankalpa,

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Pratikulya Varjanam, Maha Vishvasa, Karpanya and prayer for protection, and which was an easier means to be performed only once and by which one could attain all objects of life.

Finding him overcome with grief, being unable to practise Bhaktiyoga, the Lord out of compassion taught him this noble path of total surrender unto the Lord as follows:–

'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः' ॥

"Abandoning desire in all spiritual means that are not possible of being practised, seek refuge with me alone; I shall redeem you from all sins; do not grieve."

This glorious truth which was taught to Arjuna was the final teaching of the Lord, and it is in fact the reiteration of the truths taught in the Upanishads. Desika, the celebrated author of this eminent work, declares in the very beginning that the essential meanings of this verse directly taught by the Lord, would be explained according to the unbroken tradition – received from the illustrious line of Acharyas. This verse has profound meanings and has far reaching implications.

The first half of this verse is 'upaya vidhayaka' or ordaining the means of attainment of spiritual perfection. The latter half mentions the fruit of such performance and is dependent upon the injunction given in the first half. So, this verse is declared as 'upaya vidhana pradhana' or prescribing the means primarily.

The term 'dharma' is a means of the attainment of the object of life, that is to be known according to the shastras.

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The word in plural as 'dharmān' signifies that such means are many. The term 'sarva' suggests those 'dharmas' with all their accessories. When the term 'sarva' is considered as related to its counter part 'eka' here, it means that the totality of all means of attainment of liberation. The meaning according to this context is as follows:–

All kinds of 'mokshopayas' that are enjoined by shastras along with their respective accessories, are signified by the term 'sarva dharman'. Here, the various types of upasanas prescribed by the Upanishads such as Dahara Vidya, Purusha Vidya, Vaishvanara Vidya and others, are intended by the term 'sarva-dharmān'. But, this term does not exclude the wisdom, of 'Purushothamatva' jnanam or 'Avatara-Rahasya' jnanam and such things that are inevitable for practise of any means of liberation or mokshopaya.

The term 'parityajya' signifies 'tyaga'. As the Lord saw his helplessness to practise any other means, and as He taught this means to Arjuna here, 'tyaga' means giving up desire to undertake any other means on account of his utter inability (upayantara-nairashyam). This 'tyaga' or abandonment is giving up of any hope to practise other means. The preposition 'pari' signifies this नैराश्य or despair on account of his unworthiness for all time to come in all places. When he realises his utter inability to follow other means at all times, and in all places, he will give up totally his inclination towards all those means at all times. He realises that he cannot even practise them a little according to his ability; so, he will give up his ambition or desire to undertake the means that are ever impossible for him to practise.

This phrase – 'sarva dharman parityajya' – signifies the

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full competence of the aspirant for adopting the means of surrender. This is just like the statement –

अनित्यमसुखं लोकं इमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।

In this statement 'prapya' is not a vidhi or commandment; but, only a restatement of the form of 'प्राप्यवर्तमानः त्वम्' that means 'you who have come upon this world'. Similarly, the term 'parityajya' means 'परित्यज्य स्थितः त्वम्.' – ' you, who are here, having no hope of practising any other means'. So, 'parityajya' does not imply abandonment of dharmas, as an accessory to Prapatti. If 'parityajyam' is taken as a vidhi or commandment, then it should be understood that it is prescribing 'कार्पण्य' or utter helplessness as an accessory to prapatti. Then it will signify that all dharmas or other mokshopayas are beyond his ability. So this interpretation is also feasible. If 'parityajya' is taken as a 'vidhi' or 'commandment', it is appropriate to say that for the sake of Prapatti you need not practise any dharma, as Prapatti is not in need of anything other than its accessories.

If it is mentioned that the abandonment of all dharmas like Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and Bhaktiyoga, is to be done in their essential nature, as an accessory to Prapatti, then Prapatti will not be possible of being done by all, as it would apply to only those who are competent to practise Karmayoga, Jnanayoga and Bhaktiyoga. Tyaga can be ordained only in respect of one who is competent for it. As the masters of yore and the Alwars have expounded that Prapatti is applicable to one and all that are utterly helpless, this kind of abandonment of Karmayoga and others will not become compatible. In that case, the injunction 'Vraja' also will become incompatible.

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It cannot be said that a difficult path is first prescribed and later on negated for making one adopt an easier path. By realising success in an easier path, one will undertake a difficult path but not vice versa. It cannot be said that though the savants of the past were Prapannas, they adopted upasanas for loka-sangraha. There is no authority anywhere to support this view; even if it is admitted like that, he would be committing sin and would be giving a wrong lead by practising something which is opposed to his adhikara for the sake of loka-sangraha. If there are two paths admitted by the shastras, open to one, who is qualified for them, practising one of them which is possible of being followed by the common people, would be loka sangraha. So, it cannot be said that upasanas were undertaken for loka-sangraha.

The interpretation that the abandonment of all duties for attainment of worldly benefits (Pravritti-roopa Dharma) is intended here by 'parityajya', 'Nivritti-roopa Dharama' or Dharmas that are of the form of renunciations are not activities for one's own protection (swarakshanartha swavyapara), is also not sound because, even such renunciations are also for one's own protection. It cannot be asked on the strength of this command 'parityajya', whether the meaning of 'parityajya' implies the abandonment of all dharmas such as the pravritti and nivritti dharmas, because in that case, all kinds of divine services rendered with great care and all kinds of 'apachara-parihara' (avoiding all kinds of offences) by the savants of the past and the present would become performance of actions opposed to shastras. It cannot be said that those people, who promulgated the traditions of prapatti and who are ever compassionate, were deluded.

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It is sometime asked that there will be no contradiction if all dharmas are abandoned in their essential nature at the time of surrender, as abandonment of sarva-dharmas lifelong may be opposed to the shastras. Desika points out that this would result in the abandonment of all dharmas that are 'sambhavita' or probable at that time such as living in a holy place or having a tuft or wearing the 'pundras' and others. So, Desika points out that the meaning of 'parityajya' signifies not to resort to any dharma for the sake of prapatti, as an accessory, as prapatti does not require any accessory like karma and others.

If the meaning of 'tyaga' is ordained for 'parityajya', it may be taken as those people who are incapable of practising other means and those, though capable of other means but who cannot wait for a long time for getting moksha, – are qualified for parapatti. Desika points out that the ancients did not argue whether or not 'sarva-dharma-svarupa-tyaga' was accessory to prapatti, but they sought to know by which words of the 'charama-shloka' the competency of 'ākinchanya' is pointed out and by which terms the 'nyrapeksha' or non-requirement of any other thing for prapatti, is signified.

Some masters expounded that the term 'eka' signified that this 'upaya' did not require any other thing and some others came to an understanding that the 'ākinchanya' or the utter helplessness was signified on account of the prescription of this easy means.

If it is asked how there is difference amongst people who are qualified for prapatti as pointed out in the verse –

इदं शरणमज्ञानां इदमेव विजानताम् ।
इदं तितीर्षतां पारं इदमानन्त्यमिच्छताम् ॥

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Desika points out that there is no such difference as doubted in this verse. He explains this verse as follows:–

'Vijanatham' signifies having knowledge regarding upasanas or about the auspicious qualities of the protector that are helpful for prapatti. This does not signify knowledge of all things that are not required for prapatti. Though a person has this kind of relevant knowledge, if he is not capable of following other means, he will become an 'akinchana', qualified for prapatti. If it is asked, even if he has the ability, it may be asked whether he should not give up all activities, realising the power of the redeemer? The answer to this question is that such behaviour is an example for his activity after prapatti. If not, all the shastras that prescribe the performance of spiritual discipline, become futile. Even in case he has the knowledge of the other means, even if he has the ability to practise such means, he may decide that prapatti alone is appropriate for him who desires to gain the fruit without delay and he becomes a qualified aspirant for prapatti. This is suggested by 'idam-tithirshathampaaram' – this means that those who are feeling the urgency to get rid of all अनिष्ट or undesirables as soon as possible.

'Ānantyamichhatam' signifies that one cannot bear oneself without obtaining the experience of the Supreme fully, which is in accordance with his essential nature. This fact of getting rid of the undesirable and attaining the bliss of divine communion is signified by the phrase 'स्वभक्तेर्भूम्नावा'। Here, Bhakti means Supreme Love towards the Lord, and it does not signify Bhaktiyoga. The 'bhooma' or plentitude of this bhakti is a particular state, attaining which one cannot live without attaining that divine

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experience even for a moment. For some people, this kind of great devotion happens on account of the infinite grace of the Lord, caused on account of their 'sukruta'. So, the meaning of that verse, can be summarised as below:–

> Those people who are ignorant of the procedure in other 'upayas', those people who have a general knowledge about this particular means of prapatti, those people who have the knowledge of different means such as 'upasanas' as well as this means of prapatti, but who have no ability to practise other 'upayas', and those who have both these viz., knowledge and ability, but yet unable to bear themselves, if there is delay in attainment – all these people are qualified for self-surrender or prapatti.

Desike concludes after discussing all aspects that 'upasanas' and 'prapadana' are both valid means and meant for capable and incapable (shakta and ashakta) aspirants. Desika states that the shastras are purposeful in respect of both these kinds of adhikarins:–

'अशक्यातिकृच्छ्रेषु दुराशादार्ढ्यशालिनः ।
कस्यचित् बुद्धिदौर्बल्यात् लघुत्यागस्य कारणम् ॥
तत्र प्रपत्त्यनर्हाणां अन्यदित्यपि युज्यते ।
व्यासादिषु तु नैवेषा नीतिः संशयघातिषु' ॥

"One who is incapable of practising other means of liberation (i.e. upasanas) but who has a strong 'durāshā' namely that there is no means other than Bhaktiyoga and that he would win 'mukti' only through Bhaktiyoga, in spite of good advice by well-wishers, will give up the 'laghu-upaya' i.e. prapatti, on account of his 'buddhi-dourbalyam'

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or want of knowledge and faith. This lack of faith becomes the cause of abandonment of prapatti. The cause of not adopting prapatti is, therefore, 'vishvasamāndyam' or want of faith and not competency for Bhaktiyoga. In respect of those, who are not fit for prapatti, on account of 'vishvasamāndyam' or lukewarm faith, other means such as nama-samkirtana and others are appropriate. But, in respect of Vyasa and others that are capable of dispelling the doubts of others, it is not appropriate to say that they did not follow prapatti on account of vishvasamāndya. Thus, both these paths – viz. Upasana and Prapatti – are meant for two different types of adhikarins.

If it is asked whether the performance of the varna-ashrama-dharmas is futile in respect of a prapanna, as they are not accessories to prapatti, Desika answers that it is not so. The upasaka performs them as accessories to upasana, but a prapanna performs them not as an accessory but as 'svayam-prayojana' i.e. as loving service to the Divine.

If it is further asked whether kamya-karmas also could be done like this, Desika answers that there is no offence if kamya-karmas are not undertaken as they are opposed to his essential nature. He further clarifies that there is no 'virodha' or fault, if such kamya-karmas are undertaken for 'Bhagavat-bhagavata-samrudyartham' i.e. for the furtherance and pleasure of the Lord and the devotees of the Lord.

Thus, Desika has established that abandonment of the ordained duties in their essential nature (svarupa-tyaga) is not proper.

If sarvadharma svarupa tyaga is not ordained here, why not we take it to signify that 'upayatva-buddhi-tyaga' is

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ordained here, by the term 'parityajya'? Is not Gita teaching as follows:–

'एतान्यपि च कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम्' ॥

"These acts too must be performed without attachment and desire in fruit. This is my considered supreme view".

The answer to this doubt is as follows:–

It is proper to ordain 'upayatva-buddhi-tyaga' in the duties that are done after prapatti. Then, they will be of the form of 'phala'. If these dharmas are to be performed without 'upayatva-buddhi', then they will necessarily become accessories of prapatti. This will be opposed to the nature of prapatti, which has no accessory other than 'anukūlya-sankalpa' and others. Then prapatti ceases to be fit for an 'akinchana'. This question does not at all arise as 'sarva-dharma-svarupa-tyaga' is never ordained here.

'अतः स्वरूपत्यागोक्तौ कैंकर्यस्यापचारता ।
उपायत्वमतित्यागे तत्स्वरूपांगता भवेत्' ॥

"As elaborated above, if the view of 'svarupa-tyaga' is adopted, then the 'kainkarya' that is done will become a fault as it will result in doing something which is ordained to be abandoned. In the event of giving up 'upayatva-buddhi', then such dharmas characterised by 'buddhi-tyaga', become accessories to prapatti".

So, it is concluded that the view that the 'savrupa-tyaga' of all dharmas is ordained as an accessory to prapatti and the view that 'upayatva-buddhi-tyaga' is ordained, are opposed to all the shastras that ordain that prapatti does not

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depend upon anything, and to the traditions of the ancient Acharyas, and also to the practises of celebrated masters.

Sometimes, it is asked by some people that when a person has surrendered totally at the feet of the Lord, he is to abide by his knowledge of his essential nature, and that he is not subordinated to shastras. This also is not reasonable; because he has to know the nature of his svarupa only through the shastras and he cannot determine that this purushartha and this means are agreeable to this essential nature of jivatman of vice-versa without the shastras. There is no way of knowing the purushartha or the upaya that is agreeable to him independent of the shastras. He can generally know through sheshatva and others that he should behave agreeably to the Lord; but, he cannot know what 'kainkarya' done in what way would please the Lord or otherwise, directly before he is liberated from 'samsara'. The svarupa jnanam cannot determine the types of services to the divine and the objects to be offered to the Lord. In this respect, there is no way other than the dictates of the shastras to know the right types of services and the right types of articles of worship. Therefore, till one is liberated from 'samsara', he is bound by the dictates of the shastra.

Sri Yamuna has mentioned in this Gitartha Sangraha that a bhakta should practise all his ordained duties devoting them all to the Supreme Lord with great love and that he should surrender them all to the Lord, and that he should not have an idea of 'upaya' in those. When this is applied to a prapanna, it is sometimes doubted whether it would not lead to worship of other deities and thereby disturbing his 'paramaikantitva'? It is here mentioned by masters that a Bhaktiyogin as well as a prapanna are observing those duties

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as divine service to the Lord and for the sake of the pleasure of the Lord and so, it will not in anyway harm his 'ananya-upayatva' or the fact of having Lord alone as his 'upaya' and 'ananya-prayojanata' or having no other goal other than attainment of godhead. The Lord alone assumes the role of the other 'upayas' and grants him the desired benefits. The performance of the ordained duties of one's own station in life does not disturb his 'ekanthatva'. The Lord, who is the innerself of all deities is worshipped through the worship of gods like Indra, Varuna and others that are associated with those varna-ashrama-dharma, and therefore, there is no disturbance in 'paramaikantitva'.

The ancient masters have observed these ordained duties and have taught that one should not give up these dharmas.

Therefore, performing divine service along with the performance of the varna-ashrama-dharmas, does not contradict one's 'paramaikantitva'.

The meaning of 'माम्' and 'अहम्'

These two terms of the Charamshloka are very significant as they expound the quality of 'soulabhya' or accessibility and 'swatantrya' or supremacy of the Supreme Paramatman. In the Bhagavadgita, the Lord himself expounds the essential nature of his incarnation as follows:–

अवतारस्य सत्यत्व अजहत्स्वस्वभावता
शुद्धसत्वमयत्वं च स्वेच्छामात्र निदानता ॥
धर्मग्लानौ समुदयः साधुसंरक्षणार्थता ।
इति जन्मरहस्यं यो वेत्ति नास्य पुनर्भवः ॥

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"The incarnation of the Lord is real. He is ever in his own essential nature; His body is of the pure satva; His will alone is the cause of his incarnation; He is incarnating when dharma fades; the purpose of incarnation is the protection of the virtuous. He who knows this secret of divine incarnation will never more be born here".

The knowledge of divine incarnation is an essential accessory to Bhaktiyoga; but, for a prapanna, this knowledge of the nature of incarnation of the Lord, will show vividly his accessibility. The Lord is characterised by both accessibility and supremacy. He is the one refuge of all humanity being easily accessible and He is the Supreme Object of attainment. He is awaiting for an opportunity to save erring humanity. These two terms signify this fact of the Lord's accessibility. He is showing Himself before all and exhorting man to choose Him. This is suggested by the term 'माम्' . The term 'अहम्' shows the state of the Lord, eagerly waiting to accept one who chooses Him. So, these two words point out the 'siddhopaya' and the term 'ekam' combined with 'माम्' signifies that He does not expect anything other than 'rakshapekshapurvakabharanyasa' or entrusting the protection of one's burden preceded with a prayer for protection.

The 'sadhyopaya' or means that is to be adopted for gaining the 'siddhopaya', is pointed out by the term 'sharanam vraja'. From this, it is clear that Prapatti is a means of awakening the grace of the protector and happens to be a means for liberation just like Bahktiyoga. The Lord, who becomes pleased with this kind of surrender, happens to be the direct means for moksha. For this means of Prapatti, what one has to know particularly is 'nirapeksha-upayatva'

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or a means that does not require any other thing. What all is required is expressed in the terms 'माम्' and 'एकम्' . This term 'माम्' has all the meanings that have been signified in the Mulamantra and Dvaya, such as 'sarva-rakshakatva' or the fact of redeeming all; 'sarva-sheshitva' or the fact of having every other thing subservient to Him; 'sriyahpatitva' or the fact of being the Lord of Goddess Mahalakshmi and 'Narayanatva' or the fact of being the one goal of all living beings. All qualities that are suggested by 'paratva' and 'soulabhya' are explicitly expounded by this term, such as 'sarvajnatva' omniscience, 'sarva-shaktitva' omnipotence, 'paramakarunikatva' supreme compassion, 'soushilya' the quality of uniting even with the low and 'vatsalya' the quality of not seeing the defects of His devotees. The auspicious divine form of the Lord that is signified by the term 'charanau' in the Dvaya-mantra', which divine form is indicating His supremacy and accessibility, is also signified by the term 'माम्'.

On account of the four qualities of 'vatsalya', 'swamitva', 'soushilya and 'soulabhya' of the Lord, the Lord was very considerate to Arjuna, who was overcome by compassion towards the unworthy, and carried out his wishes such as halting the chariot in the midst of the two armies and showing his 'Visvarupa' and showing again his original form. These four qualities of the Lord are foremost in protecting those that seek refuge in Him. Among the three qualities of 'Jnana', 'Shakti' and 'Karunya', the first two are common for nigraha and anugraha, but karunya is unique for redemption.

Thus, the Lord is signifying Himself, who is characterised by all these qualities necessary for protection

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and who is showing Himself to all, by the term 'माम्'. 'Ekam' qualifying 'माम्' points out that the object of attainment (prapya) is verily the means of attainment (prapaka). Thus, the 'upaya-phalaikya' is pointed out by this term.

This means is adopted by one as dictated by the shastra and the aspirant may consider himself also, equally along with the redeemer, as a means or 'upaya' and this kind of 'upayadvitva' is negated by the term 'एकम्'.

It is taught by the masters that the term 'एकम्' is used to point out that one should not count the sadhyopaya or prapatti, as an equal means along with the siddhopaya. Though the means of prapatti is ordained just like Bhaktiyoga for awakening the grace of the Lord, the Lord alone characterised by the qualities of natural ability and compassion, is the main means of attainment. It is not proper, therefore, to think that Prapatti, caused by Him, is also a means equal to Him. This is the meaning of the term 'एकम्'.

The sadhyopaya is thus only a pretext and not the prime means; but, taking this much into account, it should not be said that Prapatti is – संबन्धज्ञानमात्रं, सिद्धोपायप्रतिपत्ति मात्रम्, अनिवारणमात्रम्, अनुमतिमात्रम्, अचिद्व्यावृत्तिमात्रम्, चैतन्यकृत्यम्, चित्तसमाधानम्, अधिकारिविशेषणम् , because, all these views are opposed to the commandment शरणं व्रज'

If 'sambandha-jnana-matram' or mere awareness of the inherent relationship or 'siddhopayapratipatti-matram' or mere knowledge of the ever existent means of the nature of

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the Paramatman, is the meaning of Prapatti, it cannot become something to be ordained as it will be of the form of mere 'vakyartha-jnanam'. The view of those that mere knowledge is the means of moksha is contrary to the exposition of Sri Bhashyam, as it will be against the command of upasanas. It is to be admitted that it will have to result in action (kartavya-jnana-matram). Even the statement of the form of 'siddhopaya-svikaram' implies that one should entrust the burden of one's protection with a formal prayer after knowing the 'siddhopaya'.

What is the meaning of 'anivaranamatram'? If one prevents the Lord to protect oneself by one's own ability, then the 'Ishvaratva' of the Lord becomes curtailed. If he prevents the Lord from saving him, by indulging in offences, then the surrender made by him should become an act of winning His grace. If he prevents the Lord from saving him by 'svarakshana-vyapara' or actions done for his protection by himself, the Lord may act and make him liberated when that person is incapable of preventing Him in states like 'sushupti' or 'pralaya' or in such waking state, when he is incapable of functioning.

What is meant by 'anumati-matram'? This fact of mere permitting or allowing, is common to upasaka also. 'Achitvyaritimatram', or being different from non-sentients, also cannot be prapatti. If it were so, even 'pratikulas' or those that act against the Lord will also have to be saved. If 'chaitanyakrityamatram' is said to be prapatti, then as upasanas and all other functions of the 'chetana' are chaitanya-kritya, there cannot be any distinction for prapatti; then, there will be no need for instruction by the Acharyas. If it is said that the spontaneous actions of a sentient are

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chaitanaya-kritya, then there will be no need for any 'upadesha' at all.

If 'chitta-samadhanam' or equipoise of the mind is said to be prapatti, then the equipoise of the mind that is not helpful for the 'phala' or fruit, will be differing from person to person, according to one's own 'ruchi' or taste and it cannot be taken as prapatti. Then 'chitta-samadhanam' will be to function according to one's own desire' –

From all this, it is understood that ishvara is one whose good will or prasāda is to be gained and He is the prime 'siddhopayam' or means ever realised. Bhakti and Prapatti are prasadanas or occasions of gaining His grace and so are sadhyopayas that are अप्रधान

The word 'ekam' is further explained as follows:–

After surrender unto the Lord, the 'sharanya' or the redeemer, who has received the burden of protection, stands aloof without depending upon other 'sadhanas' prescribed for the attainment of the desired object. An 'upasaka' has to surrender first and on the basis of that, should practise 'upasana' or meditation and then alone the Lord would be an "upaya' for that 'phala'. But, the Lord will not burden an 'akinchana', who cannot bear delay with any other 'sadhana' in the middle, when once he has surrendered and put that burden on His own auspicious qualities. He becomes a 'phala-prada' or granter of the results without any other expectation. This fact of the Lord's not requiring any thing other than the proper performance of prapatti once, is also signified by the term 'ekam'.

The term 'ekam' is also signifying the fact that it is positioned to counter 'sarva' in 'sarva-dharman' and 'sarva' in

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'sarva-papebhyah'. It means that the Lord alone is sufficient and capable of giving all attainments that could be gained by other and different dharmas.

Though 'ekam' signifies the prime means namely the 'siddhopaya', it also points out that the one prapatti alone stands in the place of all other dharmas.

Thus, Desika has expounded the several significant meanings of the term 'ekam' and sumamrises them all in the following verses. Six prominent meanings are pointed out here–

'प्राप्यस्यैव प्रापकत्वं स्वप्राधान्यनिवारणम् ।
प्रपत्तेः व्याजमात्रत्वं अन्योपायैरनन्वयः ॥
तदंगैरप्यसंबंधः सर्वसाध्येष्वभित्रता ।
इत्थमर्थाः षडाचार्यैः एकशब्दस्य दर्शिताः' ॥

The 'prapya' alone is the 'prapaka'. The importance of the 'अधिकारिन' is set aside. Prapatti is only a 'vyaja' or occasion; it is not an equal to the 'siddhopaya'. It is not combined with other means like Bhaktiyoga. It is not requiring the accessories of Bhaktiyoga. It is the one means that can get all objects of attainment. The venerable Acharyas have thus shown the six meanings of the term 'ekam'.

Some expound the meaning of 'ekam' as oneness of the 'sharanya'. Even then, Goddess Sri characterises the Lord just like the qualities and the Divine-form. Goddess Sri is the sovereign of all entities and is dear to Him. In His vow of protecting the 'jivas', She is also 'dikshita' and she is also practising His dharma. Both of them together form one 'tattva'. Though it is said that the cause of this universe is

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one, it is known from 'pramanas' that it is necessarily characterised. Similarly, here also the one is qualified by Sri.

The term 'sharanam' signifies all meanings that were expounded to that term in the Dvayadhikara. Though this kind of seeking refuge with the Lord was taught to Arjuna, it may be known that it is applicable to all people. Ramanuja says 'अनालोचित विशेषाशेषलोकशरण्य'। And in other such statements such as 'कृष्णं धर्मं सनातनम्, , 'शाश्वतं शरणं च त्वाम्', 'योगो योगविदां नेता', It is mentioned that this kind of instruction is not limited to Arjuna alone. It is applicable to all people; but, when He is to be sought, one should approach Him on account of having no other refuge. The term 'vraja' in the Charamashloka signifies surrender of the self along with all the accessories, as signified by the term 'prapadye' in Dvayamantra. In Dvayamantra, 'prapadye' is in he 'First Person', as it relates to the person that surrenders unto the Lord. In the Charamashloka, 'vraja' ordains the person standing before Him, and so it is in the 'Second Person'. This kind of surrender is to be performed only once, and it is not to be repeated as in the case of 'upasanas'.

It is asked by some, how a person who is 'atyanthaparatantra' or utterly dependent upon another one, could be ordained any duty at all? This subservience and utter dependence is known from the Mulamantra and the 'Adhyatma-Shastra. How can such a person be required to do some duty or 'kartavya'?

Desika points out that this objection is raised without considering the utmost limit of 'paratantrya'. The 'atman' has 'kartrutva', which is dependent upon the Lord. The sutras – 'कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्वात्' (V.S. 2-3-33) 'परात्तु तच्छ्रुतेः' (V.S. 2-3-40)

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ordain that the 'jivatman' has 'kartrutva' as given by the Supreme Paramatman. He carries the commands of the Lord and takes the burden of 'doership' as given by the Lord. If doership is totally denied to the atman, then it will be similar to the school of 'Sankhyas' that attribute doership to matter or 'prakriti'. It cannot be said that this doership is 'svadheena' स्वाधीन or depending upon himself, in which case, it will negate the doctrine of the Ishvara ruling over all atmans. It cannot be said that doership that is derived from Ishvara is mere knowership, because in that case, there will be no aspiration for attainment of the object of life (रुच्यभावात्) and consequently, there will be no activity for following any means. If it is further argued that knowledge and desire, which are of a particular state of knowledge itself exists, and there is no further functioning, then there will be no scope for practising different means for seen or unseen objects and also for acts of divine service that are done as 'svayam-prayojana'. So, it is established that the atman has jnanam, or knowledge, 'chikirsha' or desire to function and 'prayatna' or efforts.

This 'kartrtva' is unique to the sentient being, as related to 'prayatna' or effort – प्रयत्नाश्रयत्वरूप कर्तृत्व । Prayatna or effort is a particular kind of consciousness that prompts the body and others. It is not appropriate to say that this kind of 'kartrtva' is only in 'kainkarya' or Divine Service and not in performance of a means – 'upaya-anushtana'. Having the fact of 'Bhagavat-preeti' or the pleasure of the Lord, as a prayojana, a person practises the 'upayas'. So, in doership or 'kartrtva', the idea of 'aham' or ego of the form of 'I am the doer', which is the cause of bondage, is to be discarded. One

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has to reflect that he is functioning only according to the wisdom and power, the body and the indriyas, given to him by the Lord, as prompted by Him, who is the supporter and the ultimate beneficiary and only as he causes him to do these actions. This kind of reflection will not bind the doer. To think that he alone is the doer, and that he is acting for different benefits, will certainly bind him down to 'samsara'. Even Bhakti' and 'Prapatti' meant for attainment of different gains, are certainly binding. So, for a person, who is aspiring for 'svabhavika-kainkarya' and who is not after any other benefit (ananya-prayojana), 'kartrutva' or doership during the state of 'sadhana-upaya-dasa' is not contrary to his nature, just as 'kartrtva' in the state of liberation is not opposed to his nature.

In the state of liberation or 'mukti', the doership related to varied Divine-services to the Lord, is on account of the desire of the 'mukta', which is according to the wonderful desire of the Lord; but, the doership in this world of bondage, is according to one's own karma on account of which the Lord causes the variations of the satva, rajas and tamas and this kind of doership is varied. The doership which is related to the effect of rajas and tamas, and also satva, being the cause of attachment to different benefits, is 'bandhaka' or binding. The 'kartrtva' or doership that is on account of the preponderance of satva-guna, which will have the desire for the attainment of the Lord, is the cause of liberation. The 'kartrtva' or doership of a liberated soul is not related to 'guna-traya'. So, there is no contradiction between statements positing doership and denying doership to the atman, as they are related to particular vishayas or states. The statements that deny doership to the atman affirm that one should not think the 'kartrtva' – that is

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subordinated to the Lord, and to the gunas, that are dependent upon the Lord – as 'nirapeksha' or independent doership. The statements that affirm doership to the jivatman declare that for the knowledge 'chikirsha' or desire to act, and effort, that are derived from the will of the Lord, the atman is the 'ashraya'. So, there is no contradiction between these two kinds of statements.

It is established that the jivatman is fit for being commanded by the Lord to function, according to His intention, as the Lord has blessed him with doership. So, the jivatman has doership dependent upon the will of the Lord. So, there is every justification to command him to seek refuge with Him by the term 'vraja'.

This 'sharanagati' dharma is ordained as something to be done, just like Bhakti and others. It is to be remembered that it is not something which is independent of Paramatman's will; but only on account of Him alone, that these are caused. Here, a prapanna should think that his doership is 'paradheena' or dependent on Paramatman. The statement of some masters that forgiveness is prayed of the Lord for the prapatti done by one, should be understood as related to prapatti done with 'ahankara'. If a prapanna feels that he is offering something of his own to the Lord to be protected, that is not proper. Desika points out here, that such forgiveness is prayed to set right the feeling of 'ahankara-sparsha'. It is not an offence to have surrendered according to shastra. 'Paradheena-Kartrtva' or dependent doership, is not a fault. The view that any prohibited deed will not taint a person, who is aware of his essential nature of having no doership, is not tenable, as he has in reality dependent doership (पराधीनकर्तृत्वम्).

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The meaning of 'vraja' is sometimes explained as knowing the relationship of the protector and the object to be protected, and it is explained that a 'mumukshu' should gain 'shastra-janya sambandha-jnanam' or knowledge of the inherent relation between the 'sheshi' and the 'shesha' that is gained from the Shastra. But, this is quite opposed to the commandments of the shastra for practising the means of Bhakti and Prapatti for realisation of spiritual perfection. This knowledge, that is gained from the shastras, is actualised by 'shravana' and 'manana' that are 'raga-praptha' or possible on account of one's interest, and this kind of knowledge does not need any prescription or 'vidhi'. The masters of yore have pointed out the defects such as contradiction to the commandments of Bhakti and Prapatti, in respect of those that posit that 'avidheya-jnana' is a 'moksha-sadhana'. So, it cannot be said that 'vraja' signifies only as related to the knowledge of the relationship of the aspirant and the Supreme Paramatman. When one realises from the shastras his inherent relationship with the Lord, he will then desire to know, how he could attain the Lord, and this means of Bhakti and Prapatti are also ordained according to the competence of the aspirant and are particular kinds of knowledge that are different from mere 'sambandha-jnanam'.

Desika explains in a Tamil verse, the summary of the Charamashloka, showing vividly the several meanings of the term 'ekam'.

"I alone am the means and the end or the fruit. The sadhaka seeks refuge with me not independently, but being a dependent upon me. The means of 'sharanagati' is also not a regular upaya, but only a pretext. Other sadhanas like

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Bhaktiyoga and others, are not even accessories to 'sharanagati'. There is to other accessory for this, which is to be gained with difficulty. I myself stand in the place of other means. I alone am the messenger having the quality of sousheelya and others. I am also the master of everything. Get rid of your sorrow by taking resort in me." – Thus, says Lord to Arjuna, through this verse.

In the first half of this verse, the 'adhikari-krutya' or the duty that an aspirant has to do, has been prescribed. In the latter half of the verse, the Lord, the all-protector, who accepts the burden of protection, describes what he would do to save the aspirant and make the aspirant freed from cares and worries.

The verb – 'मोक्षयिष्यामि' is in the 'first person', and implies the subject as 'I' or 'aham'. Even so, why is the word 'aham' is used?

This term is significant because it points out the Lord who is omniscient and omnipotent, who is capable of relieving from all sins. The idea is this –

"I alone – who am having no equal or superior to Me, and who bound the erring soul to samsara – am full of mercy caused by the pretext of your surrender, am going to release you from all sins forgiving all your faults. Nobody can obstruct me from protecting you."

Is it not verily said that the Lord Vishnu is the bestower of liberation?

'पशवः पाशिताः पूर्वं परमेण स्वलीलया ।
तेनैव मोचनीयास्ते नान्यैः मोक्षयितुं क्षमाः' ॥

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"The living beings (animals) are bound by the Supreme, on account of His leela. They are to be liberated only by Him. They are not possible of being liberated by others." Thus, in this term 'aham, the grace of the Lord that was awakened by the surrender of the soul and the natural compassion and other qualities of the Lord, and also the unsurpassed 'swatantrya' of the Lord, are suggested and these are useful in setting aside all the obstructions for the liberation of the surrendered.

The natural compassion of the Lord generates His grace that ignores the infinite offences of the soul by a mere pretext of a prapatti. So, this grace will be supported by the supreme power of the Lord, and will be capable of destroying all obstructions for attainment of liberation of the 'ashritas'. So the term 'aham', which has the sense of emphasis viz., 'I alone, of this nature', is very significant in this verse.

The word 'त्वा' signifies the person, who surrenders unto the Lord, after gaining the discrimination of the three entities and who has renounced the attainment of the objects of life such as 'ऐश्वर्य' , 'कैवल्य' after having realised their defects of littleness and transitoriness, and who is yearning for the attainment of the supreme object of life of the form of the attainment of Paramatman, and who has given up other difficult means on account of his incapacity, and who has done what ought to be done by surrendering unto the Lord, who is the 'prapya' and 'sarva-virodhi-nirakarana-kshama' – (or ultimate object of áttainment and who is capable of setting aside all obstructions to his attainment) and who has nothing more to do for the attainment of his desired object.

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After having mentioned the 'moksha-prada' (the granter of liberation) and the incapable jivatman who has surrendered unto Him, by these two terms 'अहम्' and 'त्वा' – the 'bandhakas' or obstructions that bind one to samsara are mentioned by the term 'sarva-papebyah' 'सर्वपापेभ्यः' 'from all sins'.

'Papa' or sin is an 'anartha-sadhana' or a means causing untoward results that may be 'pratikula-prapti' or attainment or disagreeable things, or it may be 'anukula-nivritti' or loss of agreeable things. This term 'papa' here, signifies the 'samsarika-punya' or the agreeable things in this worldly state, as this term 'papa' is related to the mumukshu or an aspirant after liberation. Even 'svarga' and others are undesirable attainments for an aspirant after liberation. Thus, by the term 'papa', the cause of bondage of both 'punya' and 'papa' is implied in this context. The plural number in 'papebyah' points out that such causes are infinite. Here, the term 'sarva' signifies ignorance, karma, the reminiscent impressions, and the relationship with the gross and subtle body and inclination for the undesirable things. The group of all these obstructions is signified by the term 'sarva-papebyah'.

In the 'Sharanagati Gadyam', Bhagavan Ramanuja has mentioned the groups of all 'virodhis' in three paragraphs beginning with 'mano-vakkaya' etc. The statement "When the Lord wills to grant moksha even sins cannot obstruct", does not mean that there will be no displeasure of the Lord, even in case of intentional sins and so there is no need of expiation. The meaning of the statement is that, when the Lord becomes pleased with the surrender done unto Him, there will be necessarily liberation. The Lord will prompt

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such a person to surrender again for forgiving those faults and he forgives them duly and grants moksha.

The statement that the Lord relishes the faults of the surrendered, just as the dirt in the body of the lover is relished etc., should be taken in the sense that even if wicked people surrender unto the Lord, the Lord will not let them down.

Instead of this, if it is meant that intentional sins done after prapatti will be enjoyable to the Lord (bhogya), it will result in the consequence of amassing more and more such sins to please the Lord. If on the other hand, intentional sins occur on account of the 'prarabdha-karma', the Lord will inflict light punishment upon them, if they do not repent and pray for forgiveness, and take them to His side in the end. Even this kind of light punishment is a way of the Lord's forgiveness.

The argument that in the case of people, who have committed intentional sins after prapatti, and have not regretted for them, and have never asked for forgiveness, there is not even the slight punishment as witnessed in this world, is not sound, because the mode of inflicting punishment is of different kinds for different types of offences and so we are seeing different kinds of punishments inflicted on them such as suffering from the three kinds of आध्यात्मिक, आदिभौतिक, अधिदैविक torments, diminution of knowledge, obstructions for 'bhagavadanubhava', breach in the enjoyment of the bliss of service to the Lord and the Bhagavatas, censure by the celebrated ones, the destruction of particular kind of 'sukruthas', the disregard by the satvikas, the affliction of frustration of one's desires and similar such punishments. The infliction of punishment varies from

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person to person in such cases of committing intentional sins after prapatti according to the intensity or otherwise of the offence and the kinds of punishments that are listed above can be seen being enforced on them. So, it cannot be said that the incidence of punishments like this, does not happen in case of intentional sins.

So, it is an established fact that normally a prapanna does not commit any intentional sin after prapatti, and in case, on account of his past karma, such sins occur, he prays for forgiveness with repentance; and in case, one does not repent, the Lord purifies them by inflicting suitable punishment. A prapanna is, therefore, sure to attain his object of attainment with certainity.

'विवेकिनां प्रपन्नानां धीपूर्वागस्यनुद्यमः ।
मध्यानां अनुतापादिः शिक्षा कठिनचेतसाम् ' ॥

The term 'mokshayishyami' gives the assurance – "I am going to relieve you from samsara, when you desire." The Lord has vowed that he would not forgive certain sins. When it is so, is not this statement – I free you from all sins – contradictory?

The answer to this question is that these two references, relate to different subjects, and therefore, non-contradictory. The instances mentioned to point out that Lord would not forgive, means that such sins would not be forgiven, when one undertakes other light means of expiation. Prapatti is of the form of an expiation of all sins and the Lord is going to forgive all sins, when one undertakes this means and seeks His forgiveness. This statement of the Lord, is not a statement of consolation or 'उपच्छन्दन'. Releasing from sins means to give up His will to punish one who has behaved

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disagreeably from beginningless–time towards Him. When this 'nigraha' or the will to punish is terminated, all kinds of effects of 'nigraha' such as ignorance and others, disappear. To put it positively, Ishvara's nigraha-nivritti is verily Ishvara prasada. Termination of ignorance in respect of the prapanna means extension of the knowledge of the reality.

The destruction of the karma on account of the eminence and efficacy of 'upasana' or 'prapatti', means that the Lord gives up His desire to dispense the results of those karmas to those people. 'अश्लेष' or non-tainting of karmas, means that an intention to give the result of such karmas in respect of those that have taken refuge with the Lord, is given up totally by the Lord; or, we may say that an intention to dispense those results will never arise in the mind of the Lord.

If all karmas are thus relieved of the aspirant, what karmas of an aspirant of moksha – a prapanna or an upasaka – are transmitted to his friends and foes? Those karmas of his that do not taint him or that are destroyed and such punya karmas, done intentionally after prapatti and are stultified from yielding the results by more powerful karmas – 'अश्लेषविनाशविषयानि' and 'बुद्धिपूर्वोत्तर पुण्येषु कर्मान्तर प्रतिबद्धफलानि' are transmitted.

The Lord is going to transpose these karmas at the time of the fall of his body, and not at the very time of commencement of the mokshopaya, because those friends and foes may at some further time change their attitude of friendship or enemity towards the upasaka or prapanna.

Is it proper that the karmas done by some one are transmitted to some others in this way, as it leads to the

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reaping of consequences without doing actually any such deed good or bad?

It is answered that this kind of transmission of karma – good or bad – to the friends and foes of the prapanna or upasaka takes place on account of the activities of those people of the form of 'upachara' or benefaction or 'apachara' or offence. As this kind of transmission of karma, happens on account of their good-will or ill-will about the upasaka or prapanna, there is no wrong in such transmission. That is why, there is no mention of neutrals as recipients of good and bad karmas. This is in fact the good will or wrath of the Lord in respect of those people, who treat a jnani well or in a bad manner.

'Sarva-papebyah' includes –

1. all obstructions for the attainment of Paramatman according to his desire (prapti-virodhi)
2. all obstructions for the practise of spiritual disciplines; (upaya-virodhi) and
3. all causes that lead to the experience of disagreeable things (pratikula-anubhava-hetu).

Prapti-virodhi is of this form –

The will of the Lord that "this atman who has committed offences is not worthy of experiencing me."

Upaya-virodhi, is the will of the Lord that "this atman may not become capable of choosing Me after knowing My nature."

Pratikula-anubhava-hetu, is of this form –

The will of the Lord to award one the respective fruits of the offences committed by him.

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If the Lord gives up His will of the above nature, all causes of punishment get terminated and the aspirant attains the Paramatman.

When the termination of the stream of all obstructions of the form of causes and effects, happens – as mentioned in 'sarva-papebhyo-mokshayishyami', it amounts in declaring that such a person gains the manifestation of complete bliss of Divine experience. It is 'स्वतः प्राप्त' or established by itself.

The destruction of obstructions results in the full experience of the Divine and no separate effort is needed for that experience. When once an atman manifests its true nature of being subservient to the Lord and experiences the bliss of Divine communion, he will realise that all things that were appearing disagreeable earlier, are only agreeable to him in the state of liberation. Even this is implied in 'sarva-papebhyo-mokshayishyami'.

By the word 'ekam' in this verse, if oneness of upaya and phala is implied, then the 'anishta-nivritti' of the form of 'sarva-papebhyo-mokshayishyami' explicitly points out this 'ishta-prapti' or attainment of the object desired. This has been suggested in the previous verse as 'मामेवैष्यसि'. When all sins of the form of obstructions to the attainment of Paramatman are totally terminated, as declared in 'sarva-papebhyo mokshayishyami', there is no cause for the obstruction of Divine experience and so, there cannot happen, the experience of the mere atman, divested of Divine experience.

One might have got rid of all sins that obstruct the experience of ऐश्वर्य, birth and death; but, if he has not got rid of the obstructions to 'paripurna Bhagavadanubhava', he

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may rest in bliss of the experience of his atman alone. As such a person is having no relationship with the experience of the 'achit' or the experience of Paramatman, he is called a 'kevala'; but, it is not 'mukthi' or full liberation. Sometime, the term 'Kaivalya' is used for Bhagavat-prapti' also. There, the meaning of that term is the termination of all 'upadhis' or limiting adjuncts. So, 'sarva-papebhyo-mokshayishyami' implies the attainment of the full bliss of Divine Communion (Paripuran-Brahma-Anubhava).

As this verse assures the termination of all sins – the obstructions of the form of some karmas, to the full experience of Parabrahman, also get totally terminated, and therefore, such a person will attain Paramatman, as the Lord himself has declared as 'मामेवैष्यसि'. This assurance, "you will attain Me alone" signifies the bliss of communion with the Supreme Paramatman. For gaining such complete experience, there will be 'archiradi-gati' and 'desa-visesha-prapti'. The passage of the liberated person through 'archiradi' to attain the Divine Abode of the Lord, is well-known from the Upanishads and the Sutras.

All this, is signified by the statement 'मा शुचः' (Do not grieve). This statement affirms the faith of the aspirant that he may not have any apprehension regarding the ultimate goal of attainment, as all causes of grief get terminated for one who adopts this means of liberation. There is no room for an aspirant to grieve when the Lord has taught this means of surrender, which is not difficult to adopt, and which is capable of averting all obstacles without any delay.

The grief that is terminated here, is not the grief Arjuna had earlier on account of the destruction of his relatives, as

that was terminated by the Lord through the instruction of the self. It is also not the grief he entertained, whether he was born to 'asuri-sampath', because that also was terminated by the Lord, who gave him an assurance that he was born to 'daivi-sampath'. What is the grief that is terminated here, then?

When Arjuna realised his disability to practise Bhaktiyoga, which was an arduous means, set with many obstructions, and to be practised for a long time, he intensely grieved that he was incapable of following that discipline for attainment of spiritual perfection. The compassionate Lord taught him an easier means free from all obstructions, that needed to be performed once, and made him doubtless in attaining the ultimate object of life. Then, Arjuna felt relieved. The assurance of the Lord, thus relieves Arjuna of his intense sorrow caused by the difficulties in following other means. So, it is this sorrow of Arjuna that is terminated by the statement 'मा शुचः' ।

The Lord enjoined Arjuna who was depressed on account of his incapability to practise the spiritual discipline of Bhaktiyoga, to surrender unto Him, and be freed from all worries and fears. The incapable aspirant entrusted the burden of his protection to the capable Lord and the, compassionate and all powerful Lord accepted it. So, the Lord, who is omnipotent and compassionate, and who speaks the truth alone, gave the assurance that He would save him from all sins. Arjuna had no doubt about this, and his fear was dispelled. From this, it becomes evident that a person who realises his utter helplessness, will be intensely sorrowful and he would fear what would happen to him. A person who is 'bheeta' or full of fear, is qualified for 'prapatti'

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or self-surrender. After prapatti, he will be freed from fear and sorrow, as he would have no doubt about the attainment of the ultimate goal on account of the grace of the Lord, awakened by his surrender unto Him.

Desika has explained elaborately the significance of the statement 'मा शुचः' :-

1. One need not grieve, whether or not one has to struggle hard, practising a difficult means which is not possible of even very capable people, and which needs to be practised for a long time with patience;
2. One need not grieve whether or not one is fit for practising prapatti, when he has faith in the Lord and the realisation of his helplessness;
3. One need not grieve about the 'siddhopaya', who is all powerful, compassionate and accessible to all. He is a person, in whom one can have full trust.
4. One need not fear whether there would be short-comings in the accessories, as in the case of upasanas, though there are certain deficiencies on account of temporal and spacial variations;
5. One need not fear regarding the occurrence of intentional offences after prapatti, if he has surrendered to the Lord for avoiding such offences. Such offences never recur on account of that prapatti;
6. One need not fear whether he would be hurled to hell on account of intentional sins done by him after prapatti, as the Lord would purify him by appropriate punishments, if he does not repent;

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7. One need not fear whether his body would follow him even after that life, because the body would continue in that birth, so long as he desires to continue;

8. One need not fear whether the prapatti done by him would not be fruitful, on account of some wrong behaviour of his;

9. One need not fear whether he would be having further birth on account of the 'prarabdha-karma', because the prapanna has specially surrendered to the Lord for granting him moksha at the end of that body;

10. One need not fear whether there would be delay in the attainment of liberation on account of the mere experience of the nature of the jivatman (kaivalya), because the Lord has given the assurance that he would relieve him of all sins.

Desika has pointed out that the profound meanings of this Charamakavya or final statement would be taught by the celebrated Acharyas at their 'charamadasa' or last moments to the deserving disciples.

The gist of this celebrated verse is summarised as follows:–

> "You entrust the burden of your protection to me along with five accessories without wandering in other spiritual means that are yielding the results with long delay, which are difficult to know and practise by you, who are of little knowledge, little ability and who exists for a limited time and who cannot bear delay, deciding that I alone, am accessible to all and that, I am the one refuge of the entire world, and that I am characterised by all qualities helpful for redeeming one."

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"I who am supremely compassionate and all powerful, and who am pleased with your surrender, will for my own sake relieve you, who have done your duty and entrusted the burden of your protection unto me, from the infinite, many-fold, unsurmountable hosts of all obstructions, once and for all. I shall make you an equal to me in enjoying the bliss of communion with me and endow you with my complete service which is of the form of the spontaneous flow of the ecstasy of my experience at all times in all places and all states. I shall derive supreme joy by making you thus. You need not grieve."

Having expounded the meanings of this supreme mantra, Desika declares that this way of exposition was taught by the preceptors of yore. The preceptors who sought refuge with the one and non-second Lord, who is ever associated with the Mother 'Sri', who is the one dharma standing in the place of all dharmas, and who is the bestower of all objects, and who got rid off all sorrows, – expounded this path of explanation for this sacred mantra.

'एकं सर्वप्रदं धर्मं श्रिया जुष्टम् समाश्रितैः ।
अपेत शोकैराचार्यैः अयं पन्थाः प्रदर्शितः' ॥

In the concluding verse, Desika pays his homage and veneration to the great Acharyas, who expounded in a glorious way the meanings of this eminent verse, which happens to be the ultimate teaching of the Lord Krishna to Arjuna. This verse is here, praised as the eminent 'Koustubha gem' that emanated when the milky ocean was churned. This Charamashloka is similar to that 'koustubha gem' and is picked from the vast ocean of Mahabharata composed by

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the great Veda Vyasa. This verse is also very dear and pleasing to the Lord, just like that 'Koustubha gem'. Our Acharyas realised that this verse enshrines the supreme meaning of 'sharanagati', as propounded by the shrutis and the smrutis. The path taught in this celebrated verse, is cherished by all people with great respect. The interpretations of our Acharyas happen to be the staircase (a flight of stairs) to the highest place of liberation. The eminent Vyshampayana as well as Shuka, Shounaka, Narada and other celebrated sages nod their heads with joy and appreciation in response to the glorious way of explanation of this great verse. They consider that it is their good fortune to listen to such eminent exposition.

'व्यासाम्नायपयोधि - कौस्तुभनिभं हृद्यं हरेरुत्तमं
श्लोकं केचन लोकवेदपदवीविश्वासितार्थं विदुः ।
येषामुक्तिषु मुक्तिसौधविशिखा सोपानपंक्तिष्वमी
वैशंपायन शौनकप्रभृतयः श्रेष्ठाः शिरः कम्पिनः' ॥

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संप्रदायप्रक्रिया भागः

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CHAPTER - XXX

Acharya Kritya Adhikara

After expounding the meanings of the three eminent rahasyas in the section 'Pada-Vakya-Yojana', Desika describes the process of handing over this eminent knowledge from teacher to pupil in the traditional way. First of all, the role of an Acharya, in preserving and transmitting this supreme wisdom to worthy disciples, is described. The characteristics of the Acharya, are also referred to, here. In the duties of the Acharya, the main factor happens to be the propagation and preservation of the 'satsampradaya' or well-established tradition.

The introductory verse points out the main functions of the Acharya, or spiritual preceptor:–

'अधिजिगमिषुराद्यम् धाम दिव्यं त्रिधाम्नः
श्रुतविविधपरीक्षाशोधिते क्वापि पात्रे
अनघगुणदशायां आहितस्नेहमार्यः
प्रदिशति निरपायं संप्रदायप्रदीपम् ' ॥

Desirous of attaining the primeval Supreme Abode of the Lord, the Acharya hands over the eternal lamp of tradition to a worthy disciple, who is tested by different tests, and when he is predominantly satvik, showering his affection on him. In this verse, the Acharya is enjoined to hand over the supreme knowledge of the atman to the deserving disciple before casting away his body. It is verily said –

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'पात्रस्थमात्मज्ञानं कृत्वा पिण्डं समुत्सृजेत् '।

The disciple should be tested and only after that, instruction is to be given, if he deserves that knowledge:–

संवत्सरं तदर्धं वा मासत्रयमथापि वा ।

परीक्ष्य विविधोपायैः कृपया निःस्पृहो वदेत् ॥

"By testing the disciple for an year or half of it or three months in different ways, the teacher should impart instruction out of compassion, without desiring anything in return." The teacher should make sure that the mind of the disciple is pure and firmly devoted to that knowledge. This instruction should not be given for the mere asking of it, without due consideration of the merits and demerits of the people. This instruction is to be given while one is in a satvik state. It is enjoined that the preceptor should give an instruction out of mere compassion and affection. This 'smapradaya' has been handed over from preceptor to disciple without any break in the middle, beginning with the Supreme Paramatman. This lamp of knowledge of the form of tattva, hita and purushartha, which dispels the darkness of ignorance, should be placed in the hands of a deserving disciple, for being preserved and propagated amongst his worthy disciples.

While explaining the duties of an Acharya, Desika points out that a preceptor, who has gained this knowledge from the line of his Acharyas, and which knowledge is not known to others, should guard it from unworthy persons and should hand it over to the deserving disciples. Lord Krishna exhorts in the Gita that the 'Gita Shastra' should not be taught to a person, who has not a virtuous conduct,

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to one who has no devotion towards the teacher as well as the Supreme Paramatman, to one who is not eager to listen to those truths and never to one who sees faults only in the virtues of the Lord and his devotees. Desika quotes this and applies this inter-alia in the case of instruction of these profound truths of the three rahasyas. He who imparts this secret teachings to the devotees of the Lord, will gain supreme devotion towards the Lord, and attain Him alone undoubtedly. It is pointed out in the Mahabharata, in the context of a dialogue between Vashista and Karala that the supreme knowledge of tattva, hita and purushartha should not be taught to the following persons:–

'नावेदनिष्ठस्य जनस्य राजन् प्रदेयमेतत् परमं त्वया भवेत् ।
विवित्समानस्य विबोधकारकं प्रबोधहेतोः प्रणतस्य शासनम् ॥
न देयमेतच्च तथानृतात्मने शठाय क्लीबाय न जिम्हबुद्धये
न पण्डितज्ञाय परोपतापिने'' ॥

"This profound knowledge of the shastra, which is the cause of enlightenment, should not be taught to one who is not steadfast in the teachings of the Veda, to one who is untrue in his mind, to one who is a deceiver, to one who is a napumsaka, to one who is crooked-minded, to one who thinks of himself as a scholar, and to one who causes offences to others."

It is pointed out here that this supreme knowledge should be taught to a person, who has the following qualities:–

'श्रद्धान्वितायाथ गुणान्विताय परापवादाद्विरताय नित्यम् ।
विशुद्धयोगाय बुधाय चैव क्रियावतेऽथ क्षमिणे हिताय' ॥

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विविक्तशीलाय विधिप्रियाय विवादभीताय बहुश्रुताय ।
विजानते चैवहितं क्षमादमाय नित्यात्मसमाय देहिनाम् ॥

"A person who is feeling an urge and urgency to listen to the secret truths; a person who has the qualities of 'shama' and dama'; a person who has pure devotion towards the Lord; a person who never indulges in speaking ill of others; a person who is quick in grasping the truths taught; a person who is capable of practising the ordained duties; a person who wishes the good of all; a person who is fond of being far from the crowd, a person who likes to follow the code of conduct; a person who has widely listened to the teachings of the masters and on account of which who knows what is good, a person who is endowed with compassion and forbearance and who has the understanding that the eternal atman in all is of the same nature – is qualified for receiving instruction from the teacher."

The great Shandilya ordains that even at times of great crisis this unique knowledge should not be imparted to unworthy people. It is better, he says, even to die without teaching others than teaching the unworthy people.

Desika points out that there are great hazards during the present period of 'Kali-Yuga' and one should be highly guarded from the temptation of instructing others into the secret teachings of these rahasyas.

'गोपयन्नाचरेद्धर्मं नापृष्टः किञ्चिदुच्चरेत् ।
पृष्टोऽपि न वदेदर्थं गुह्यं सिद्धान्तमेव च ॥
आश्रितायातिभक्ताय शास्त्रश्रद्धापराय च ।
न्यायेन पृच्छते सर्वं वक्तव्यं शौचयोगिने' ॥

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'One should practise dharma without showing what he is practising; one should not teach anything by himself, unless he is asked; even when asked, the inner meanings should not be said at once.' Then, to whom, should one impart this instruction?

'To one who approaches the master as ordained in the shastras and who requests for an instruction and to one who is pure in his thoughts, words and action, to one who is having faith in the shastras and who has devotion towards the Lord and his teacher, this Supreme Truth should be taught.'

It is ordained that a preceptor should not teach a disciple for gaining name or wealth or respect or for show or for gaining his livelihood. At any rate, if it is taught to one who is unworthy of it, the teacher himself will be falling from the right mode of life.

आत्मपूजार्थं अर्थार्थं डम्भार्थं अपि खिन्नधीः ।
अयोग्येषु वदन् शास्त्रं सन्मार्गात्प्रच्युतो भवेत् ॥

Desika quotes a number of authorities to establish the fact that a role of an Acharya is very arduous and that the responsibilities that he carries with him are of immense importance. He has to judge carefully the ability and worthiness of a disciple, and teach him the supreme mantras and truths. Only in that case, it will lead to the good of the world. He should not hold it away from the worthy disciple.

'ऋजवे गुरुभक्ताय वैष्णवाय विशेषतः ।
सर्वप्राण्यनुकूलाय दातव्यो देशिकेन तु ' ॥

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"A preceptor should impart this secret teaching to a disciple who is straight forward, who is devoted to his teacher, who is a devotee of Vishnu and who is agreeable in his behaviour to all living beings."

When it is taught, it should be taught in strict privacy to the disciple.

The preceptor considers the ability and aspiration of the disciples and gives them instruction elaborately or briefly, according to their needs. The gist of the teaching of the preceptors will be like this -

प्रत्येयस्तु विलक्षणः प्रकृतितस्त्राता पतिस्तत्परः
तस्मित्रात्मभरार्पणं हिततमं तच्छेषवृत्तिः फलम् ।
इत्थं तत्त्वहिते पुमर्थ इति नस्त्रेधा विभक्तं धनं
दायत्वेन दयाधनाः स्वयमदुः दत्तात्मनां देशिकाः ॥

There is an eternal atman who is different and distinct from the body, sense organs, the mind the vital airs. The Supreme Paramatman is the inner-self of both the sentient and the non-sentient entities that are different and distinct from Him. That Supreme Paramatman, is the redeemer of all humanity and no one else can be the protector of this atman other than Him. "From beginningless time, I have been migrating from birth to birth in this world and I pray unto you to save me from the afflictions of re-birth and to protect me by taking me unto your feet."

Praying thus, one should surrender unto the Lord and entrust Him with the burden of his protection and the protection of all that is taken as his. While surrendering thus, he has to meditate upon the feet of the revered Acharyas, on

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account of whose grace, he gained this wisdom and the way of his emancipation. After having surrendered, one should have the firm faith that the Lord would not let him down and as long as he is placed in this world, he must be engaged in agreeable service to the Lord, avoiding all kinds of offences.

Thus, the revered Acharyas will enlighten the disciples about the Supreme Truth and the way of spiritual realisation and duties that are to be performed after surrendering oneself unto the Lord. The same truths are expounded elaborately by the masters to such disciples who are eager to study in great detail, with all their specifications.

Vedanta Desika has mentioned in conclusion of this chapter that all these truths were taught to him by his revered preceptor, Kidambi Appullar, and that he has faithfully presented them in this treatises.

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CHAPTER - XXXI

Shishyakrityadhikara

In this section, the duties and behaviour of a disciple are outlined. This is an important instruction that is to be practised by all disciples for achieving fruitful success in their enquiry after knowledge.

It is ordained that the disciple should be devoted to the teacher as he is devoted to God. He must be ever grateful to the preceptor for endowing him with the lamp of knowledge. Devotion towards the preceptor is the root cause of all good that happens to one. It is ordained that it should be firm. He must always recount the holy names and qualities of his preceptor with great regard. He must have great regard towards the possessions of the preceptor such as his residence or the deities or the holy texts and others. The disciple would serve that master in an eminent way if he hands over the knowledge gained from his preceptor to those of his disciples who are virtuous. He is enjoined to guard that wisdom from the unworthy. The disciple should be ever grateful to his master who has out of compassion endowed him with precious knowledge. The disciple will practise the dictates of the shastras as ordained by his preceptor. What wealth does he not gain, if he is endowed with this kind of behaviour? The wealth suggested here, is the attainment of the Supreme Paramatman, to whom he would be offering loving service for all time to come. This is pointed out in the introductory verse to this chapter:-

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अशिथिलगुरुभक्तिः तत्प्रशंसादिशीलः
प्रचुरबहुमतिः तद्वस्तु वास्त्वदिकेषु ।
गुणवति विनियोक्तुं गोपयन्संप्रदायं
कृतविदनघवृत्तिः किं न विन्देन्निधानम् ॥

A disciple will be grateful to his preceptor, not in the sense of 'pratyupakara' or doing some good in return but for not violating the dictates of the shastras that ordain that such people who are ungrateful are great sinners, severly punishable.

सर्वस्वं वा तदर्धं वा तदर्धादर्धमेव वा ।
गुरवे दक्षिणां दद्यात् यथाशक्त्यपि वा पुनः ॥

'He should offer every possession of his, or half of it, or half of that half as 'dakshina' to the preceptor, or he should offer 'dakshina' according to his ability.' This statement only ordains a duty of the disciple as pointed out in **'तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया'** and it is not a favour done to the preceptor. The preceptor teaches without any desire for anything in return, out of compassion and he does not need any 'prayojana'. So, it must be understood by the disciple that he is not doing a 'pratyupakara' to the teacher by offering a 'dakshina'. The great sages like Shandilya and Apastamba, have prescribed the duties of the disciple that a disciple should treat the Acharya, as an equal to God himself **'न प्रमाद्येत् गुरौ शिष्यो वाङ्मनःकायकर्मभिः'। अविभज्यात्मनाचार्यं वर्तेतास्मिन् यथाच्युते ॥ 'देवमिवाचार्यमुपासीत'** There cannot be any 'pratyupakara' for a preceptor who teaches him the knowledge of Brahman –

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'ब्रह्मविद्याप्रदानस्य देवैरपि न शक्यते ।
प्रतिप्रदानमपि वा दद्यात् शक्तित आदरात्' ॥

"It is not possible even for the Gods to pay the 'dakshina' to an Acharya, that befits the instruction of Brahma-Vidya. One should give according to one's ability the 'Guru-Dakshina' with great regard." The disciple should never think that he is helping the preceptor in return to his invaluable instruction. The disciple is exhorted to make good use of the supreme knowledge that is taught to him by his teacher. It should cause in him dispassion; it should result in righteous conduct and it should be made use of for gaining perfect calmness of mind. The disciple is warned against making misuse of the knowledge he gained from the preceptors. He must guard the supreme knowledge from people who are only fault finders. He should ever be grateful to the teacher for the great benefaction he has done to him, and remember him day-in and day-out with great reverence.

When he hands over that knowledge to his tested disciples, he must pay obeisance to the line of his teachers and he must teach his disciples in a way that the greatness of the Acharyas and the truths are well pointed out. He must acknowledge with all humility his indebtedness to his great masters, when he gives instructions in the supreme secrets to his disciples. Though one has great scholarship and ability to understand the profound truths from the texts, it is absolutely necessary for one to gain knowledge through the Acharyas and only then, it will have the efficasy, as it comes from tradition.

When one enlightens his disciples, if one does not proclaim one's own preceptor's greatness and compassion,

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the truths that one imparts will be without any basis and one will be committing an offence of not proclaiming one's teachers while instructing one's students:– It is mentioned as one of the thirty two offences.

'स्वगुरूणां स्वशिष्येभ्यः ख्यापनं चाकृतं तथा' ।

Similarly, if one teaches something opposed to the instructions given by his teachers, he will be a deceiver and he will be going against the shastras. In the same way, if he fails to instruct a deserving disciple at the appropriate time, he will be committing the fault of transgressing the Divine Command. It is declared in the following verse, as follows:–

'पात्रस्थं आत्मज्ञानं कृत्वा पिण्डं समुत्सृजेत् ।
नान्तर्धाय स्वयं याति जगद्बिजमबीजकृत् ' ॥

'Before the fall of his body, a person should hand over the knowledge he possesses (the shastra) to a virtuous and worthy disciple. The Acharya should so behave that, without enlightening - through instruction - the Veda Shastras (जगद्बीजं), he should not give up his body. Such a person will be called 'lubdha' (लुब्ध). Even when he gains some knowledge through his insight, by the grace of the Lord, he must realise that he has gained that knowledge by the grace of his Acharyas.

An Acharya will have attained his object of life by gaining such a worthy disciple, and the disciple will be gratified hereafter by gaining such a preceptor, who instructs one the direct means of liberation –

'साक्षान्मुक्तेरुपायान्यः विद्याभेदानुपादिशत् ।
कथ्यते मोक्षशास्त्रेषु स तु श्रेष्ठतमो गुरुः' ।

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आचार्यवत्तया मोक्षमामनन्ति स्मरन्ति च ।

इहामुत्र च तत्पादौ शरणं देशिका विदुः ॥

In the moksha-shastras, it is ordained that he, who teaches the different modes of 'upasanas' that are direct means to moksha, is the most celebrated of all teachers.

The shrutis and smrithis expound that moksha is possible only through an Acharya. The ancient masters like Alavandar and others, have declared that the Holy Feet of the Acharyas are the object of attainment here, that is prior to moksha, and elsewhere, that is in the state of attainment of moksha. The sacred feet of the Acharya alone are our refuge, as evidenced in the prayer of Alavandar as –

'नाथाय नाथमुनयेऽत्र परत्र चापि

नित्यं यदीयचरणौ शरणं मदीयं' ॥

In the concluding verse of this chapter, Desika expounds that the disciple or the 'shishya' will not consider any higher deity than the Acharya. This shows the supreme devotion which a shishya or disciple should have towards the preceptor –

'अध्यासीनतुरंगवक्त्रविलसज्जिह्वाग्रसिंहासनात्

आचार्यादिह देवतां समधिकामन्यां न मन्यामहे

यस्यासौ भजते कदाचिदजहद्भूमा स्वयं भूमिकां

मग्नानां भविनां भवार्णवसमुत्तिराय नारायणः' ॥

We never consider any other deity as greater than our Acharya, on the tip of the tongue of whom – which is verily the throne – where the Supreme Lord 'Hayagreeva' is

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adorning. The role of the Acharya is so great that sometimes, the Supreme Paramatman – Narayana – who is the God of all gods – himself assumes the form of an Acharya for lifting up the transmigrating souls, who are drowning in the ocean of 'samsara'.

Thus, in this chapter, the duties of a 'shishya' are expounded by the celebrated author.

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CHAPTER - XXXII

Nigamanadhikara

In this section, there is a recapitulation of all the truths taught earlier in the thirtyone chapters. Before summarising the truths of the thirtyone chapters, the meanings expounded in the four-parts are mentioned in the opening verse–

'करबदरितविश्वः कश्चिदाचार्यदृष्ट्या
मुषितनिखिलमोहः मूलमन्त्रादिभोगः ।
सगुणविषयसिद्धौ संप्रदायं प्रयच्छन्
सुचरितसिलहारी सूरिबृन्दाभिवन्द्यः' ॥

A fortunate person, who has to his credit, the performance of some 'vyaja', will become the object of the kind glances of the Acharya and will realise very clearly all the truths such as the doctrine of the sentient, non-sentient and Ishvara, the means of spiritual realisation and the doctrine of the Highest Object of attainment, like a 'badari' fruit in the palm, getting rid of all kinds of delusions and he will reflect with delight, upon the meanings of the three great mantras viz., Mulamantra, Dvaya and Charamasloka, and will initiate these truths to a worthy and virtuous disciple and leading a pious life will attain the assembly of the 'Nitya-suris' in the end, going through 'Archiradi'. By the term 'करबदरितविश्वः', the 'Arthanushasana' portion is signified. मुषितनिखिलमोहः points out 'Sthirikarana-bagha'. The phrase 'मूलमन्त्रादिभोगः' signifies the 'Padavakya-yojana-

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bhaga'. सगुणविषयसिद्धौ indicates the 'Shishya-krityadhikara'. संप्रदायं प्रयच्छन् signifies the 'Acharyakrityadhikara' which is a part of 'Sampradaya-Prakriya-Bhaga'.

After suggesting the meanings of the four parts of this work thus, Desika summarises the meanings of the several chapters in the same order and integrates the meanings of those chapters into a connected and whole statement – a Mahavakya.

The jivatman, who is qualified to enjoy the bliss of communion with Paramatman along with the 'Nitya-Suris', by his essential nature, being deprived of it from beginningless time, wakes up at sometime and gaining the grace of the 'Guru' endeavours to gain the knowledge of the tattva, hita and purushartha (the meaning of Upodghatha-Adhikara). He realises that the Rahasya-Traya are the 'sarathama' among the 'pramanas' that teach the ultimate truth of tattva, hita and purushartha (the meaning of Saara - Nishkarsha - Adhikara). He will realise that the relationship of body-soul, as the most important and unique truth that is to be known from these 'pramanas' (the meaning of Pradhana-Prathitantra-Adhikara). He will know how the three 'Rahasyas' expound the knowledge of the 'Artha-Panchaka' (the meaning of Artha-Panchaka-Adhikara), and will make an enquiry into the nature of the three 'tattvas' that are included in the 'Artha-Panchaka' (the meaning of Tattva-Traya-Adhikara), and decides that the one who is propounded as Ishvara is Sriman Narayana (the meaning of Paradevatha-Paramartha- Adhikara), and having known all these truths, he will become an aspirant after liberation (meaning of Mumukshutva Adhikara). He will gain knowledge about the different qualifications of the different

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kinds of 'mokshopaya-adhikarins' (meaning of Adhikari-Vibhaga-Adhikara) and he will study about the various 'upayas' that are agreeable to different 'adhikarins' (meaning of Upaya-Vibhaga-Adhikara) and will ascertain the necessary qualifications of a 'svatantra-prapatti-nishta' (meaning of Prapatti-Yogya-Adhikara) and will equip himself with all the accessories ordained for Prapatti (meaning of Parikarana-Vibhaga-Adhikara) and actually surrenders the burden of his protection along with his 'svarupa' and 'phala' thereof unto the Lord as ordained (meaning of Sangaprapadana Adhikara). Then, he becomes a 'kruta-krutya' (meaning of krutakrutya-Adhikara). Having surrendered unto the Lord, he will introspect and by the marks in his behaviour, he will realise that he is steadfast in his true nature (meaning of Swanishtabhijnana-Adhikara). He will devote himself to the service of the Lord so long as he is placed in this world after his 'prapatti', (meaning of Uttarakrutya Adhikara) and he will realise that the utmost limit of service to the Lord, is service unto the devotees of the Lord (meaning of Purushartha-Kashta-Adhikara), and that he has to render all service only according to the dicates of the shastra (meaning of Shastritya-Niyamana-Adhikara). He has to be very careful in doing service unto the Lord, avoiding all offences, and if they happen, he has to repent and pray for forgiveness (meaning of Aparadha-Pariharana-Adhikara). Such a prapanna will reside in a Holy place, where 'Bhagavatas' take resort (meaning of Sthana-Vishesha-Adhikara). Having lived the life destined here, he will depart from the body according to the will of the Lord (meaning of Niryana-Adhikara) and being led by the path of 'Archiradi' (meaning of Gati Chintana Adhikara) he attains the Supreme Abode of Sriman Narayana and will be blessed with the bliss of Divine

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Communion culminating in loving service to the Lord for all time to come (meaning of Paripurna-Brahmanubhava-Adhikara).

In the succeeding four sections, the doubts that may arise about the 'Siddhopaya', the 'Sadhyopaya' and the 'prabhava' or the eminence of the Prapanna have been cleared. The exposition of the meanings of the words and constructions of the three eminent 'Rahasyas', that are the sources of all the above truths, is undertaken in the three further chapters.

The mode of propagating this 'sampradaya' according to the shastras, has been outlined in the Acharya-Kritya-Adhikara'. In the 'Shishya-Kritya-Adhikara', the duties of a disciple are ordained.

Thus, in these thrityone chapters, all these significant truths have been taught.

Desika points out in conclusion that all these truths were taught by him in accordance with the shrutis, smrithis and the traditions supported by valid means of right knowledge giving no room for doubt or wrong understanding. He says 'we have expounded these truths, just as we heard from our masters, and as we felt in our heart'.

These truths should be obtained from a सदाचार्य'sadacharya' rooted in this tradition, by one, by approaching him in the proper manner as a disciple. He should also follow the 'sadachara' of the teachers of yore and tread on the path illumined by these three rahasyas.

This treatise bestows all good and averts all undesirables. One who imbibes this wisdom, and surrenders

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unto the Lord, will get rid of migration in this world and attains the Supreme Paramatman, reaching that abode through the 'Archiradi' path, led by the 'athivahikas'. He will be blessed with the direct vision of Sriman Narayana who is adorning the Paramapada Paryanka. Here, Desika mentions the two glorious situations of the Lord adorning the golden throne in his 'avatara' dasha. One relates to Sri Krishna and the other relates to Sri Rama.

Sri Krishna adorning the sovereign throne in 'Dwaraka' shone resplendently –

ततो महति पर्यंके मणिकांचनचित्रिते ।
ददर्श कृष्णमासीनं नीलं मेराविवांबुदम् ॥
ज्राज्वल्यमानं वपुषा दिव्याभरणभूषितम् ।
पीतकौशेयसंवीतं हेम्नीवोपचितं मणिम् ।
कौस्तुभेन ह्युरस्तेन मणिनाभिविराजितम् ।
उद्यतेवोदयं शौलम् सूर्येणाप्तं किरीटिनम् ॥
नौपम्यं विद्यते तस्य त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ॥

Then he beheld Lord Krishna adorning the mighty golden throne decorated with gems; who was resplendent like a dark cloud resting upon the golden mountain Meru. He was shining with the brilliance of his beautiful form decorated with Divine ornaments and yellow silken garment. He shone like a blue gem set in gold. He was shining with the decoration of the Kaustubha gem adorning his chest. The glorious crown he was wearing was shining brilliantly just like the Sun that has risen on the eastern mount. There is no comparison to him in all the three worlds.

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The second illustration relates to Sri Ramavatara, when Sumanthra approaches Him:–

तं वैश्रवणसंकाशं उपविष्टं स्वलंकृतम् ।
ददर्श सूतः पर्यंके सौवर्णेसौत्तरच्छदे ॥
वराहरुधिराभेण शुचिना च सुगन्धिना ।
अनुलिप्तं परर्ध्येन चन्दनेन परंतपम्
स्थितया पार्श्वतश्चापि वालव्यजनहस्तया ।
उपेतं सीतया भूयः चित्रया शशिनं यथा ।
तं तपन्तमिवादित्यं उपपन्नं स्वतेजसा ।
बवन्दे वरदं वन्दी विनयज्ञो विनीतवत् ॥

(अयोया - १६-८, ९, १०, ११)

"The charioteer, Sumantra beheld Sri Rama, who was like Kubera, resplendent with ornaments and who was adorning the golden throne which was covered with costly silk. He shone brilliantly with the precious sandal Paste smeared over his body. Sita was by his side holding a fan in her handi. Just as Chitra serving the moon. He was brilliant with his lustre just like the Sun, Sumantra who was modest bowed to Sri Rama, the granter of all boons" ?

These two glorious descriptions of the Lord in the incarnation, indicate the glorious situation of the Lord in 'paramapada'. Those fortunate ones who have surrendered unto the Lord, or who have practised 'Bhaktiyoga' reach the Supreme Abode of the Lord, being led by the guides on the way (athivaahikas) and they will attain all kinds of endearing service to the Lord at all times, in all places and in all states, getting their true nature manifested.

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Thus, the Holy Feet of the Supreme Narayana alone, the Lord of the Goddess 'Sri', are to be propitiated and cherished both in the state of 'upaya' and 'phala'.

Desika praises the greatness of the sacred feet of the Lord in three verses in amil' and concludes this Great Treatise as follows:-

इति यतिराजमहानस परिमल परीवाह वासितां पिबत ।

विबुधपरिषन्निषेव्यां वेदान्तोदयन संप्रदायसुधाम् ॥

This treatise which has been described up to this stage, beginning with 'Guru-Paramparasara' is the extension of the Supreme Grace of Bhagavad Ramanuja in respect of Sri Kidambi Acchayan, who was very dear to him. This nectar of the form of the essentials of the three rahasyas is to be enjoyed along with all people, who are yearning to get rid of the torments of 'samsara'. This is the nectar of the tradition which was promulgated by the preceptor, Sri Pranathartihara, who was well known as 'Vedantodayana'. The author invites all good natured people to enjoy the Supreme Truths of the Rahasya Traya.

If it is asked how this Great Work would fulfil its purpose, if some people – who are jealous – do not welcome and entertain it, Desika says that he is not in anyway worried about that.

कलकण्ठ गणास्वाद्ये कामस्यास्त्रे निजांकुरे।

विंबवृत्तिभिरुद्गीर्णे न चूतः परितप्ते ॥

The mango sprout, which is a shaft of 'Manmatha' and which is enjoyed by the cuckoo, will not sorrow at any time, if it is spit by crows. Likewise, if unwise people do not show regard to this

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work, the greatness of the work will not in anyway diminish. The merit of the work will not at any time be disturbed.

Desika points out here that he does not in anyway feel bad, if this eminent work is not received with regard, by some unwise people.

Offering his obeisance to his Great Master, Sri Ramanuja, Desika feels supreme satisfaction for having spent all his life in enjoying the Great Works of Ramanuja with supreme love and devotion.

In conclusion, Desika declares that he would neither feel joyful or sorrowful, if this work is well-received or otherwise. The renunciation of 'kartrutva', 'sambandha' and 'phala' is made in the concluding tamil verses. "The Lord Hayagreeva, assuming the role of a preceptor of the form of Vadi Hamsambhuvaha blessed me with his supreme teaching and what supreme meanings he recorded on the sheet of my mind, I have put them in this form. This supreme work is the work of that Supreme Lord Himself. I am just like a writer, who writes what is dictated. What defect can be in this celebrated work! If people entertain this as something teaching the Supreme truths, or if people think that this is of little value and disregard it, my mind will neither rejoice nor sorrow. I am in anyway not worried about that." Desika who was a 'sthitaprajna', has here expressed his equanimity of mind.

This supreme work was authored by the Supreme Hayagreeva Himself, and it is suggested that wise people should derive the benefit from it.

रहस्यत्रयसारोऽयं वेंकटेशविपश्चिता ।
शरण्यदंपतिविदां सम्मतः समगृह्यत ॥

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"This work – Srimad Rahasyatrayasara – is presented here by Lord Venkatesha Himself (by the all-knowing Venkatanatha), as it becomes agreeable to all those people who are the realisers of the Divine Couple, that are the resort of all those who have surrendered unto them".

कवितार्किकसिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।
श्रीमते वेंकटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

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Nikshepa Raksha

Nikshepa Raksha is one of the five Raksha granthas written by Desika. This treatise is written in defence of Prapatti. This is meant for enlightening the followers of Ramanuja in the doctrine of Prapatti. This is not for generating faith in the followers of other schools regarding this doctrine. This doctrine of Prapatti is extolled as 'मान्यं यतीश्वर महानस संप्रदायं' and Desika explains the significance of this doctrine according to the teachings of ancient masters like Sri Vishnuchitta, Sri Vatsya Varadacharya, Sri Atreya Ramanuja and others.

Desika states the prima facie view that "Prapatti is not a distinct and different means of Moksha" - at the very outset and raises nine objections against Prapatti as follows :-

'स्वरूपलक्ष्मानुष्ठान विध्यदृष्टैर्निषेधतः ।
ऐक्यादशक्तेरख्यातेः सम्प्रदायविरोधतः ।।'

The nine incompatibilities pointed out are 1. The अनुपपत्ति or incompatibility regarding its essential nature of being different from Bhakti, 2. the अनुपपत्ति regarding लक्षण or definition 3. अनुष्ठानानुपपत्ति or the absence of its adoption for moksha, 4. the absence of any authority enjoining it, 5. the fact of negation of any means other than Bhakti for gaining Moksha, 6. the incompatibility of its non-difference from Bhakti as it is only an accessory to Bhakti, 7. the inability to perform Prapatti, 8. it is not prominently known from the Sastras and 9. it is contrary to tradition as it is not bequeathed by the line of teachers i.e. Guruparampara.

These Anupapatti's are described in detail one after the other in the former portion of this treatise that forms the Purvapaksha bhaga.

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In the later part of this work these objections are refuted one after the other in the same order and the conclusion is established that Prapatti is a distinct and valid means for Mukti and that it is a sufficient substitute for Bhakti yoga or Upasana. It is a universal means that can be adopted by one and all for the attainment of their desired object inclusive of Moksha.

A brief summary of the objections and their refutations is given here under -

1. Svarupanupapatti

Objection : Prapatti is neither siddharupa nor Sadhyarupa. If it is Siddharupa it cannot be enjoined to be performed. If it is Sadhyarupa, it will not be of the form of Jnana, as it will be of the form of an action through speech or body. It will be just like stuti, an accessory to Bhakti yoga - 'वाक्कायरूपत्वात् स्तुत्यादिवत् ज्ञानात्यकत्वाभावेन' etc. This results in the abandonment of the truth 'ज्ञानादेव मोक्षः' ।

Answer : We admit that it is not "Siddharupa" and so the objection does not arise. It is sadhyarupa, but we do not admit that it is वाचिकादि क्रियारूप । So there is no room for abandoning Jnana as the means of Moksha. Sharanagathi is admitted as मानसिका and it is शास्त्रजन्य ज्ञानादधिकविषया । It is of the form of विधेयज्ञान and this objection does not arise.

Objection : Is prapatti having any accessories or not ?

If you say it has, then it is opposed to your statement that it is a निरपेक्षोपाय ।

Answer : The elaborate Karmas and others that are required for the three yogas such as Bhaktiyoga and others are not required for Prapatti - This is what is meant by

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निरपेक्षो। It does not mean that Prapatti is not having the unique and particular accessories that are established by Pramanas.

'भक्तियोगादित्रयेतिकर्तव्यताभूत- गुरुतरकर्मनैरपेक्ष्यमात्रं हि अत्र विवक्षितं ।

Objection : Is Sarvadharma parityaga a vidhi ? or an anuvada ? It cannot be either.

Answer : It is not a vidhi. It does not mean that one should abandon all dharmas. Dharmalopa is not admissible for a prapanna. सर्वधर्मशब्देन प्रस्तुतमोक्षोपायान्तराणां विवक्षितत्वात्। It means that one gives up a desire to follow other means of liberation on account of his utter inability.

'प्रपदनाङ्गभूत-आकिञ्चन्यपुरस्कार - विरुद्धोपायान्तराशाप्रहाणमेवात्र त्याग इति न विरोधः' ।

Similar doubts that arise regarding the svarupa of Prapatti are all dispelled according to the authorities of जितन्ते स्तोत्र, लक्ष्मीतन्त्रम् and अहिर्बुध्न्यसंहिता ।

The Svarupanupatti is answered as follows

स्वनिर्भरत्वपर्यन्तरक्षकैकार्थ्य भावनम् ।

त्यक्तरक्षाफलस्वाम्यं रक्ष्यस्यात्मसमर्पणम्''

प्रपदनमप्यत्र प्रार्थनापूर्विकं परस्यै देवतायै प्रत्यगात्मरूपहविषस्त्यागः। The svarupa of Prapatti, its accessories and the nature of Sarvadharma parityaga have been thus expounded by the great master in this work.

The Second objection raised against the definition of Prapatti is answered as follows : अत्र सौहार्द तु अव्याप्त्यादिरहितम्

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लक्षण वदामः । अनन्यसाध्यस्वाभीष्ट साधनसमर्थवशीकरणं शरणागतिः इति' । There is no अङ्गि over and above six factors mentioned. Of the six, निक्षेप is described as the main and the others are accessories. "Prayer" is described as Sharanagathi on account of the fact that it gets included in Sharanagathi and that it is a प्रधानभूताङ्ग । According to the Satyakitantra न्यास is described as the main or अङ्गि in the primary sense in the statement. 'अनेनैव तु मन्त्रेण स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत्' । It is thus established that Prapatti can be properly defined.

3. The objection that it is not seen among ancients that anyone was liberated through Prapatti alone as evidenced in the scriptures is refuted as follows ::It cannot be said taht Prapatti was not at all observed. Nor can it be said that Prapatti was not performed for Moksha. Vibheeshana and others performed Prapatti as known from the ithihasas and Puranas. It is very well known that Kshatrabandhu, Muchukunda and others performed Prapatti as a direct means to Mukti : 'त्वामेव शरणं प्राप्य निस्तरन्ति मनीषिणः' is a well known statement.

4. The objection that there is no injunction enjoining Prapatti as "One should perform Prapatti" - is countered next as follows : It is established that mantras are all विधिपर । The scriptural authorities such as, मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये', 'ओमित्यात्मानं युञ्जीत' prescribe Prapatti for being saved. The sum and substance of Sri Rama Charama Shloka is - 'अभयप्राप्तिकामो मां प्रपद्येत ' । 'मामेकं शरणं व्रज' and याहि सर्वात्मभावेन' are all positively enjoining Prapatti. The satyakitantra says, 'गच्छ शरणं

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हरिम्' । This is established by Sruti and others and so it cannot be said that it is not established.

5. If it is argued that any means other than Bhakti is negated in the statement 'तमेवं विद्वान् अमृतः इव भवति, नान्यः पन्था अयनाय विद्यते' ।

The answer is given that 'नान्यः' means भक्ति प्रपत्तिव्यतिरिक्तः' । The rule regarding the general and exception points out that the negation applies to that which is other than prescribed. Just as there are different modes of Upasana "Nyasa Vidya" also is one included in them. So this objection does not arise.

6. The next objection raised is that Prapatti is one with Bhakti Yoga, being an accessory to it. The authorities that prescribe Prapatti do so as an "anga" or accessory to Bhakti yoga. So it is not an independent and direct means to Mukti.

The answer to this objection is as follows : Prapatti can be an "anga" or accessory or a direct means or "angi" according to the purpose required, as pointed out by the rule of विनियोगपृथक्त्व । Just like any mode of Upasana, Prapatti also can function as a direct means to Moksha. This is made clear by the following authorities :

'सत्कर्म निरताः शुद्धाः सांख्ययोगविदस्तथा ।
नार्हन्ति शाणस्थस्य कलां कोटितमीमपि "।
'यद्येन कामकामेन न साध्यं साधनान्तरैः
तेन तेनाप्येत तच्चन्यासेनैव महामुने" ।

So it need not be doubted that Prapatti is one with Bhakti Yoga.

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7. The next objection relates to the impossibility of Prapatti being observed as Prapatti requires the cessation of all activities.

This objection is unfounded, as such a requirement is never accepted. A Prapanna is never seen to be totally actionless. Even the savants of the past have expounded "the giving up of all activities that are opposed to the activities of the Lord". Nowhere is it said that सर्वप्रवृत्तिनिवृत्ति is Prapatti. What is to be discarded is the idea that one can save oneself by one's own effort independent of the Lord. One should give up all efforts to seek protection from anyone other than the Lord. The involuntary functions like winking of the eyes, inhaling or exhaling and the performance of the ordained duties as devout worship of the Lord are not required to be given up. So this objection that Prapatti is impossible to be performed after giving up all activities does not stand.

8. The next objection is that Prapatti is not well-known as a मोक्षोपाय । In all the eighteen Vidyasthanas, the four tantras or the Shilpasastra, Prapatti is nowhere mentioned as a distinct means for gaining Moksha. What is Prapatti is not clearly known. So it is an unknown means. Moreover Mahavisvasa cannot be actualised.

Answer : By the term अख्याति you cannot intend to say that the essential nature of Prapatti is not existent. This view is already refuted. You cannot even say that it is not a distinct and different means, because it is taught as a different and distinct means in Ahirbudhnya Samhita and others. The mere fact that it is not taught profusely cannot contradict its teaching in a few places. The testimony of other schools like Sankhya and others is of no avail to us as we do not follow them closely. The great masters of yore like Valmiki, Parasara,

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Vyasa, Shuka, Shounaka and others have glorified this doctrine in their great works and so the above objection is totally untenable.

9. The nineth and the final objection is that Prapatti is opposed to the Sampradaya or tradition. The ancient acharyas have not traditionally taught or practised Prapatti as an independent and different means to Moksha. It is taught only as an "agna" or accessory in Sri Bhashya and Gita Bhashya. There might be references to Prapatti but they are also for Karma, Jnana or Bhakti. So Prapatti is not the means according to the tradition.

Answer : Tradition or Sampradaya is of three types, namely, उपदेशपरम्परा, अनुष्ठानपरम्परा and निबन्धपरम्परा । All these there are found in Prapatti. This is evidenced by the Srutis and Smrithis and these truths are also taught by the preceptors to their disciples.

The fact that Anga Prapatti is taught in the Sri Bhashya and others cannot contradict that Prapatti is an independent means as there is no statement like that anywhere. Sri Bhashyakara has practised and taught Prapatti as a direct and sufficient means to Moksha.

Conclusion : The fact that Prapatti is different and distinct from Upasana and that it is also a direct and independent means to Moksha becomes established as Prapatti is free from the incompatibilities like "Svaroopa anupatatti" and others. Thus this celebrated treatise has carefully examined the incompatibilities against Prapatti and has once for all refuted them. Sri Vedanta Desika has thus ably expounded and established the doctrine of Prapatti on unfallible valid grounds.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

"Among hundred and odd sacred texts conferred by Vedanta Desika, Srimad Rahasyatrayasara occupies a special place because of its many distinctive features."

It contains the sum and substance of Sri Visistaadvaita Philosopy and Sri Vaishanava Religion. It teaches tattva, hita and purushartha, to be necessarily known by a mumkshu, i.e., an aspirant after moksha. It accepts prapatti or sharanagathi, as an independent and efficacious means for moksha."

"The declaration of prapathi as mokshopaya which is open to all, throws light on devotion to truth and catholicity of Visistadvaita Philosophy"

(from Srimukham)
of His Holiness

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